PC ZONE

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In this issue:

THE DIG
Spielberg's adventure at last!

NHL HOCKEY 96
The finest sports game ever?

HEXEN
Could Heretic 2 be better than Doom?

MAGIC CARPET 2
Bigger and faster... the best gets better!

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BEYOND ANY 3D GA

The end to Doom too's marks a new epoch in gameplay. Legendary masters of the action game - id Software have joined forces with Raven, delved deep into their collective

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twisted psyches and given birth to this spellbinding terrifying monster of a blast fest - the darkest, deadliest and best kept secret of 1995.

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PPA

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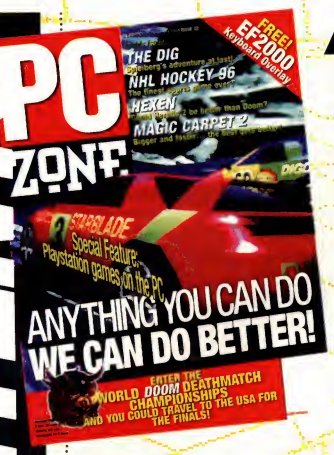
CONTENTS



Anything you can do, we can do better: PlayStation games on the PC

We look at the symbiotic relationship between Sony's new wonder-console and PC CD-ROM and show that the PC can do pretty much anything we want it to. See page 52 for the full report.

FEATURES

Anything you can do, we can do better: PlayStation games on the PC 52
Now that Sony's PlayStation has finally reached the shops, all of a sudden everyone thinks that games are actually cool. Fear not though! The PC won't be left behind – far from it in fact. PlayStation and PC development run hand in hand and both machines are pushing each other to the limit.

Microsoft 86
We continue our look at Microsoft and Windows 95 this month, and wonder if it really will change the face of the PC.

Let's talk about Sex! 95
So why don't we associate girls with computer games? Is it really just a pastime for sad, smelly blokes with no sex life? Do girls really give a toss? Er, about games that is?

BLUEPRINTS

Hexen 28
The latest game from iD which is technically *Heretic 2*. But forget the original – this thing is absolutely stunning and is rumoured to be the last game that will use the *Doom* engine.

The Dig 31
At last Speilberg and Lucas' collaboration is almost ready. After years of waiting we get the chance to see one of the most eagerly awaited point-and-click adventures. Check out the demo on the cover CD.

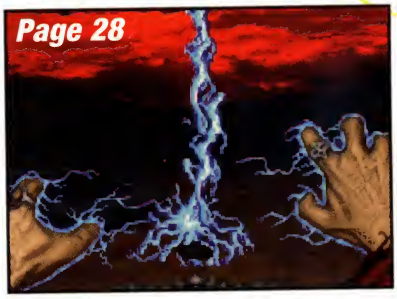
Formula One Manager 34
Forget all this football management stuff, this is the real thing. Sit down, dig out a few tinnies and pretend to be Frank Williams for an evening.

Mortal Kombat 3 37
Another *Mortal Kombat* – hoorah. Like we really need another one? Oh well, never mind. It does look like an absolutely perfect arcade conversion though. Let's just hope the PC can handle it!

FIFA '96 40
After more than a year PC owners get the version of *FIFA Soccer* that they deserve. You no longer have to gaze at the 3DO version with envy, this looks like the mutt's nuts (metaphorically speaking that is, not literally).

Waterworld 44
A 'real-time' resource management game where you have to try and get the film out under budget. No, no, it's a sort of *Command & Conquer*-ish combat/strategy thing that looks rather top and Kevin's nowhere to be seen.

This Means War! 47
And this is another one, but *This Means War!* runs under Windows and sports lush hi-res graphics. These things are getting bloody popular at the moment, aren't they?



Page 95

Games Dir.ectory

Al Unser Jr Arcade Racing	91
Ascendancy	68
Battle Beast	82
Burn:Cycle	85
Crime Patrol	76
Darker	75
Fatal Racing	64
FIFA '96	40
Formula One Manager	34
Gamegun	76
Hexen	28
Magic Carpet 2	60
Mission Critical	50
Mortal Kombat 3	37
NHL Hockey 96	78
PGA Tour 96	80
Pitfall	89
Primal Rage	71
The Dig	31
This Means War!	47
Waterworld	44

Page 60

Page 52

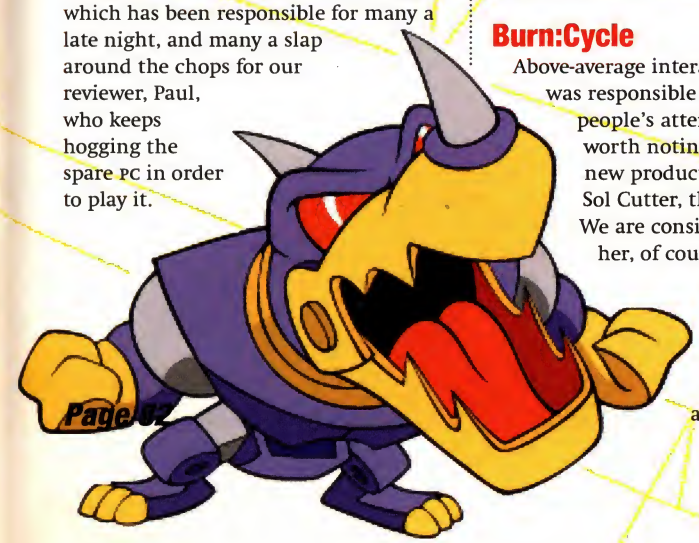
Mission Critical 50
Legend Software (remember them? *Spellcaster 101* etc) returns with a high-tech SVGA role-playing adventure thingy that has got Virgin rather excited.

REVIEWS

Magic Carpet 2 60
Bullfrog brings us the follow-up to the incredible *Magic Carpet* (odd that, innit, considering the title). We give it to Macca who decrees that it is in fact better than the original.

Fatal Racing 64
Gremlin brings us an excellent hybrid of *Ridge Racer* and er, *Streakaround* (remember that – it was the stunt car thing that used Matchbox cars – cool). Will it stand up against all the other polygon racers around though?

Ascendancy 68
Intergalactic strategy game from Virgin which has been responsible for many a late night, and many a slap around the chops for our reviewer, Paul, who keeps hogging the spare PC in order to play it.



Page 52

Primal Rage 71
Any beat 'em up that allows you to piss on your opponent as a finishing move has to be worth something, surely?

Darker 75
Mediocre 3D blast 'em game from Psygnosis. It's got nice smooth polygons and there's lots of things to shoot at but, er, that's about it really.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun 76
I suppose the concept of shooting at your PC with a bright orange revolver is quite a good one. You may get to pump the bad guys full of bullets, but ultimately it just makes you feel a prat.

NHL Hockey 96 78
Yet another version of *EA Hockey* for the PC, but this time it uses the new EA Sports' 'virtual stadium' technology that makes *FIFA Soccer* look so flash. Definitely one of the nicest looking sports games we've reviewed in ages.

PGA Tour 96 80
Yet another EA Sports title gets the '96' treatment. But, er, what's the difference with this one, eh guys?

Battle Beast 82
A cartoon beat 'em up that runs under Windows. Admit it, it doesn't really stand a chance, does it? C'mon.

Burn:Cycle 85
Above-average interactive movie that was responsible for attracting people's attention to CD-i. It's worth noting that Thea (our new production editor) fancies Sol Cutter, the main character. We are considering sacking her, of course.

Pitfall 89
One of the first Windows 95 native games to appear is a conversion of the ancient Atari VCS platform game. Well, it's a pity it's nothing special really.

Al Unser Jr Arcade Racing 91
Another Windows 95 native game (bloody hell, we're really going to town here, aren't we?), this time in the shape of a *Virtua Racing* clone designed to be played across a network.

BUDGET REVIEWS

Powerplus and Sierra 92
This month we take a look at the best new stuff from the Powerplus range of MicroProse titles, plus the first batch of budget releases from Sierra On-Line.

HARDWARE

VFX1 VR Headgear	112
Orchid NuSound	114
Ace Movie Master	115

REGULARS

Bulletin	11
The Chart	22
Through the Keyhole	24
Subscriptions	104
Troubleshooter	116
PC Zone On-Line	108
Buyers Guide	122
WordProcessor	134
Cartoon	137
Mr Cursor	138

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Page 71

C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK

To load the games simply pop the disk in your drive, make that drive current and then type <PCZONE> to start things rolling. All you have to do then is follow the instructions on screen.

Worms (Team 17/Ocean)

One of the most addictive games of the year, the aim is to control a team of psychotic worms out to kill their enemies across a scrolling landscape. A brilliant game for one or two players, this is the first time the full shareware version has been made available outside of Ocean's BBS. The game is mainly mouse controlled, with the right button bringing up the weapons menus, the left button selecting a target, and the arrow keys moving each individual worm around. Use the spacebar to fire your chosen weapon.

Warning! This game could ruin your life. You have been warned!

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

The Machines (Merit Studios)

Top-down *Alien Breed*-esque shoot 'em up from the chaps at Merit Studios. Equip your robo-herc (whatever one of those is), get yourself tooled up and then stroll into the arena for a huge enormous scrap. Top stuff with loads and loads of blasting.

Controls: Keyboard

CD-ROM DISC

To access the software on this month's CD-ROM simply pop your CD in the appropriate drive, make the thing current (ie type <D:> or whatever) and then type <ZONE> at the prompt. The PC Zone menu software should then kick in fairly quickly and you can select what you want to load from the menu system using your mouse.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

The Dig (LucasArts)

Wicked playable demo of what has to be one of the most eagerly awaited point-and-click adventures ever. This one has been knocking around for YEARS! Well, it's finally here and we've got an awesome demo. This particular little snippet includes one of the first puzzles from the game along with a jolly splendid intro sequence. Speilberg and Lucas unite for a PC game. What more could you possibly want?

Controls: Mouse

This Means War! (MicroProse)

MicroProse has a crack at the action/strategy genre that is currently being made so popular by the likes of

(Below) *The Dig* could well turn out to be one of the best adventures yet from LucasArts.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (32), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

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CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles (*never* before 11.00am) on: 0171-917 7693

(Left) Strategy-tastic action from MicroProse this month with the fab *This Means War!* demo.

(Below) That bloke, believe it or not, is Michael Dorn, the geezer who plays Worf.

Command & Conquer. This demo takes you through some of the gameplay basics and lets you experiment with both the resource management and combat elements of the game.
Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Requires Windows 3.1 or above, SVGA

Sim Isle (Maxis)

Another title in the *Sim* series of titles from Maxis, where this time you have the unenviable task of managing an entire rainforest as you dabble with ecosystems and industry. If you like your games complicated, this is without a doubt the game for you.
Controls: Mouse
Specifications: SVGA

MechWarrior 2 (Activision)

Activision's long-awaited Mech game is finally with us, and bloody good it is too. This playable demo gives you a taster of the action and also lets you sample the staggering presentation of one of the best robot games to date.
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick, ThrustMaster FCS
Specifications: SVGA, 8Mb

Action Soccer (Ubisoft)

Decidedly jovial football sim that combines *FIFA*-style graphics with very arcade-style gameplay. It's not for the die-hard *Sensi*-head, but certainly a treat for anyone who doesn't take their footie games too seriously.
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, joypad

Capitalism (Interactive Magic)

A strategy game of money, power and wealth that puts you in control of your own empire as you try to gather as much dosh as you can possibly lay your hands on. Learn all about the stock market as well as how to run business in a game that could almost be described as educational. Well, almost.
Controls: Mouse
Specifications: SVGA

The Machines (Merit Studios)

Top-down *Alien Breed*-esque shoot 'em up from Merit Studios. Equip your robo-herc (whatever one of those is) get yourself tooled up and then stroll into the arena for a scrap. Top stuff with loads of blasting.
Controls: Keyboard

Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's just being a total bast? Then just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then pick up the phone and ring the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm.

CD-ROM HELP

Phone Miles Tudor on 0171-917 7693
Any week day between 11am and 6pm.
(DO NOT phone earlier as your calls will NOT be answered.)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible i.e. System type, sound card, RAM etc., plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

Tech specs

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)
Processor: 386DX (486DX recommended)
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

ROLLING DEMOS

Mission Critical (Virgin)

The latest adventure game from Legend, the top US adventure game developer responsible for such all-time classics as *Spellcaster 101* and many others. Superb SVGA visuals and moody soundtrack show that this could be one of the surprise classics of the year. (You can find out more by checking out our Blueprint on page 50.)

UTILITIES

As well as all of the game demos on this month's CD we also have a collection of helpful utilities for you. Most of these will help you out in Windows.

WinZip: A Windows front end for the immensely popular PKUNZIP.
Video For Windows: Which is er, exactly what it says.
McAffee Anti Virus: One of the top anti-virus utilities around.
Paint Shop Pro: Cool graphics processing package plus drawing thingy.
QuickTime 2.01: The latest video driver for QuickTime.
Graphic Workshop: Excellent graphics viewer for Windows.
AMEOL: Top CIX browser, the ideal way to get connected to *PC Zone's* forum.
WinG: The games bit that bolts onto Windows to make everything run faster. »

PC Zone is proud to present a CD-ROM full of the latest demos of forthcoming products from Ocean Software. To access the software on the disc, plonk the disc in your CD drive, make the drive current and then type <GO> at the prompt. All you have to do then is follow the instructions on screen.

Worms

Control a team of psychotic, fully armed, nutter-worms as they try to obliterate their enemies across a scrolling landscape. A brilliantly addictive game for either one or two players, this is the first time that the full shareware version of the game has been made publicly available.

The game is controlled mainly with the mouse, using the right button to bring up the weapons menus, and the left to select a target; as well as that, you can use the arrow keys to move each individual worm around. Use the spacebar to fire your chosen weapon.

Without a doubt one of the most playable games of the year so far – check it out! Be warned though, this game will take over your life and have you squeaking 'hello' in a stupid voice for at least the next couple of months.

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Football Ltd

This is a novel twist on the football management theme. Rather than going for the traditional *Championship Manager*-style route of just team tactics, this little baby puts you in the position of Chairman of the club. Not only is the way that the team plays important, but you also have to run the thing like a successful business as you buy property, players, bits and bobs for your stadium and other such considerations that you wouldn't normally have to think about.

We reckon this could turn out to be one of the most comprehensive business management games of the year. Take a good look. This demo is exclusive to *PC Zone* and is actually a very early version of the software which is currently being translated from the original German version of the game, which is called *Bundesliga Manager*. Bear this in mind if you come across any screens that happen to be in German – don't panic! The finished version of the game will of course be in English!

For those of you who like to get their money's worth from a cover disc demo, this has to be one of the best around. If you play the entire season all the way through, it should take you at least 15 hours. Excellent or what?

Controls: Mouse

EF2000

A cool rolling demo of what could well turn out to be the best game of the year. Last month we gave *EF2000* a stonking 97%, making it one of the highest rated games in *PC Zone* ever. So good that even NATO are considering using it as a pilot training aid. What greater accolade can you ask for than that?

Hit Squad

Check out the latest titles on Ocean's extremely popular budget label – Hit Squad. All of the best budget releases for 1995 are previewed in this demo.

Iron Angel

Polygon-tastic futuristic combat sim that has been in development at Ocean for well over a year. Featuring some of the most detailed polygon graphics in an action game ever, this could well turn out to be one of the most exciting releases before Christmas.

Silent Steel

Have you checked out the amazing movie *Crimson Tide*? Well, this fabulous FMV adventure game is set on the same submarine. Featuring a superb script as well as some of the best quality video footage yet seen in a computer game, *Silent Steel* will no doubt be regarded as a landmark in interactive movie development. Z

GAME

What would you say if some geezer walked up to you and said, 'How would you like a voucher for £5 off the most addictive game of the year?'

Er, how would you like a voucher for £5 off the most addictive game of the year?

Yes! It's true! *PC Zone* readers are exclusively offered out of the kindness of GAME Ltd and Ocean Software's collective hearts £5 off the killer game *Worms*.

Try it on the Ocean disc this month – it's the most addictive multi-player game ever!

PC Zone readers are entitled to £5 off *Worms* PC (floppy or CD versions) in all GAME outlets on production of this voucher.

WORMS

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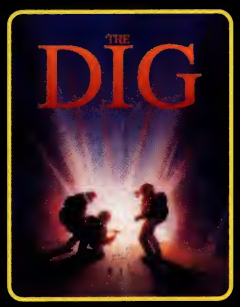

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Official World Doom Deathmatch Championship

How do you fancy your chances of winning the title of Ultimate Doom Deathmatch Champion of the World? Think you've got what it takes to compete against the best that the world has to offer? Do you reckon that you're better than Macca? Well, now you've got the opportunity to prove it. The world final will be taking place on 13 October 1995 at Microsoft's headquarters in Seattle. For the chance to be there, all you have to do to is enter. The qualifying heats for the UK leg of the championships will be in the following HMV stores:

Manchester	***Saturday 14 October***
Birmingham	***Saturday 14 October***
Oxford	***Saturday 14 October***
Leeds	***Saturday 14 October***
Liverpool	***Saturday 14 October***
Brighton	***Saturday 14 October***
Croydon	***Sunday 15 October***
Glasgow	***Sunday 15 October***

The final will be held at:
HMV Level One in Oxford Street, London on ***Sunday 22 October.***

There will be one winner from the individual heats, each one then fighting it out until there is just one overall champion. Expenses for winners to travel to London will be paid by GT Interactive. The eventual UK champion will then be taken to Seattle by GT Interactive to act as the British representative at the final. All players must be aged over 15 to comply with *Ultimate Doom's* 15 rating, but should the finalist be under 18, an adult must accompany him/her to Seattle.

Only the winner will be paid for, which means that regretfully expenses for accompanying adults cannot be met by GT Interactive. The world final will take place on Monday 30 October and obviously the winner will need to make sure that week is kept free.

How the Deathmatch Championship will work

The Deathmatches will be played on four-way networked versions of *Ultimate Doom* and the winners will be determined by the first player to get to 20 frags in each match. The winners of each leg will win the trip to London, as well as every game from GT Interactive's 1995 catalogue – this will obviously include titles such as *Ultimate Doom*, the *Doom* Screen Saver, *Mortal Kombat 3* and *Hexen* (among many others).

The UK final will be played in much the same way, with one final winner being found by the end of Sunday 22 October. Obviously, seeing as this is an event for real *Doom* pros, you WILL be able to reconfigure the controls of *Doom* to allow for mouse play.

The world Deathmatches in Seattle will be played on *Ultimate Doom, Doom II* and *Heretic* with the final play-off being played on *Hexen*. This event will mark the first ever public showing of *Hexen* and will act as the global launch of iD/Raven's incredible new game (see our Blueprint on page 28).

To enter the heats simply fill in the form below and hand it into your nearest branch of HMV by Friday 13 October.

(Above) All of the initial heats will be fought out on *Ultimate Doom*, however the final match in Seattle will be battled out on GT's forthcoming *Hexen* (see preview on page 28).

OFFICIAL WORLD DOOM DEATHMATCH CHAMPIONSHIP

ENTRY FORM:

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

.....

Age (players must be over 15): .....

To be handed to the games rep at a participating HMV store before Friday 13 October. Limited number of places only.

KNOW HMV · KNOW GAMES

Dungeon Keeper

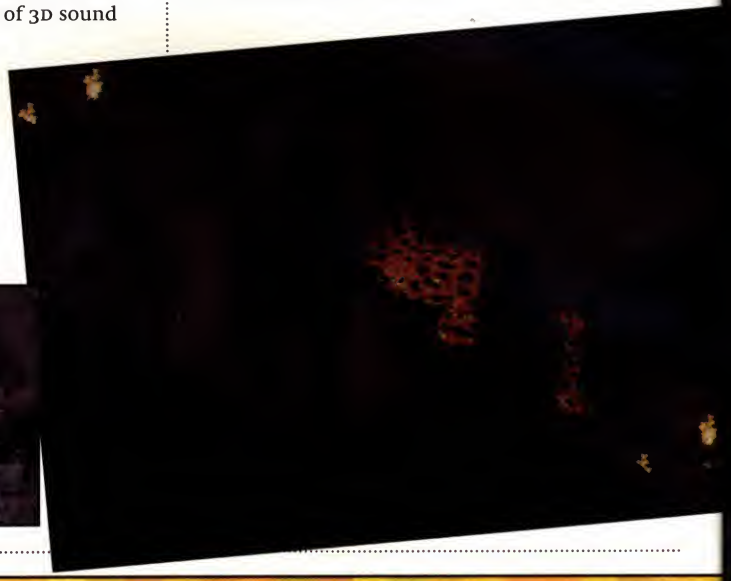
UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST EAGERLY AWAITED RELEASE from Bullfrog is the revolutionary *Dungeon Keeper*, a stunningly original and fantastic new game that looks set to turn the rather staid concept of RPGs completely on its head.

The game includes a variety of tools, spells and monsters which the player must use to build and construct a dungeon capable of withstanding the rapacious efforts of hordes of heroes and pillagers who are intent on destroying the evil that lurks within and making off with all the loot.

Dungeon Keeper uses one of the most sophisticated game engines ever developed and enables the player to design their dungeon from a top-down viewpoint and then enter it through a 3D first-person perspective to lay traps, monsters or to just spy on the trespassers. What's more, it's all beautifully light sourced, makes use of 3D sound effects and has an artificial intelligence so sophisticated that monsters and NPCs not only look for intruders and potential threats, but they actually lie in wait and listen for them too.

Although the game isn't due for release until December, there is currently talk of a multi-player network option that will allow players to design and create their own dungeons, stick them on the network and let other gamers take their chances on-line. Dungeon masters will also be able to go on-line at the same time and build new areas, repair bits of their dungeon that have been damaged by marauding treasure hunters and defend areas as they are attacked. But get this – because the game actually learns the way you play, when you eventually go off-line the dungeon continues to avert the threat of other on-line players just as if you were playing the game for real. It'll even alert you if things start to get a little too nasty and the heroes start to threaten your dungeon's existence.

Prepare to wave goodbye to any kind of social life from December onwards.



Dispatches

+++ Good PCs Cost Less...
Supermarket giant Sainsburys is attempting to break into the PC leisure market in a big way. At present 11 of the chain's Supersava centre stores are stocking PCs, software and accessories, and if the 'toe in the water exercise' proves a success, more stores will follow suit and begin to stock Compaq Presario and ICL PC TVs, educationally-based CD-ROM and floppy software alongside baked beans and Pampers. Arch rival Tesco has so far denied that it will be bringing out its own line of budget blue-and-white striped PCs in an attempt to lure the penny-pinching public away from brand names such as IBM, Compaq and Gateway (pun intended).

+++ PC TV
Watch TV on your PC courtesy of Philips' new Full Screen TV Card, available from Silica for £116.33 (including VAT). The card delivers twice the resolution of a conventional TV for a much sharper image and is ideal for grabbing TV or video. The card's built-in tuner can handle up to 49 terrestrial or cable channels, including a 'search and memorise' tuning algorithm and is designed to work with all PCs with a 286 processor or faster. Contact Silica on 0181-309 1111 for further details.

+++ It's a bit of an Animal
The latest top idea to hit the PC gaming world – a game (or multi-format blockbuster if you prefer) starring the loud-mouthed and terminally hip Peperami character. Little is known about the spicy sausage interactive media product as yet, except that it is being developed by Microtime Media and is due for release early next year. Watch out for a new *Doom*-based game starring the Tetley Tea Men and a driving game sponsored by Ford in which you have to run over Jane Asher.

+++ And a bit of an Alien
If you missed the spook 'media event of the century' on TV last month you can now watch it frame by frame via your PC screen. *The Roswell Alien Autopsy* is out now on CD-ROM, and not only does it include the *'Incident at Roswell'* documentary as screened exclusively on Channel 4, but 20 minutes of unique black and white footage showing the autopsy of an alien life form, alleged to be a body recovered from the Roswell wreckage. The CD is available in MPEG or QuickTime format and features a freeze frame facility and direct access to specific clips. Contact OmniMedia on 0181-974 6766 for further details.

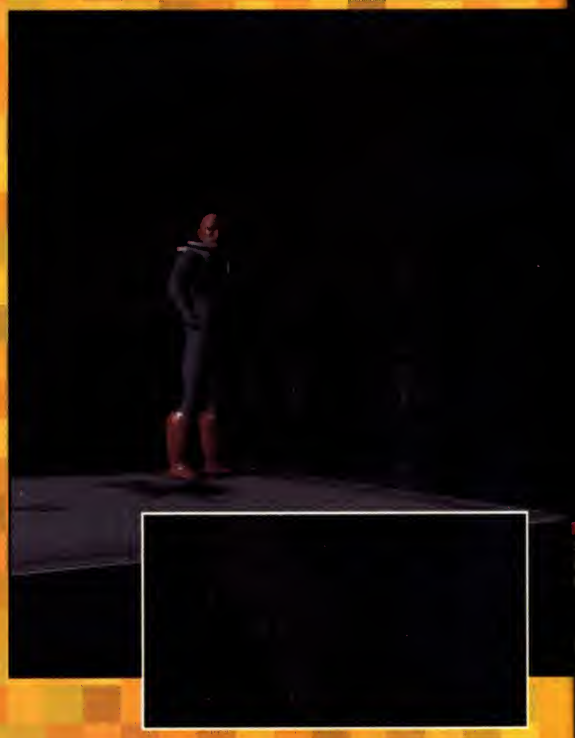
+++ Myst Again
No, not another lame ditty from the ex-*Genesis* crooner, but a novel of the acclaimed CD-ROM adventure. *'Myst: The Book of Atrus'* by Rand and Robyn Miller is the first of a trilogy and a prequel to the million-selling adventure game. The novel is due to be published in hardback in December by Bantum Press and will retail for £16.99. Contact Transworld Publishers on 0181-579 2652 for further information.

The Indestructibles

The game formally known as *M.I.S.T.* (or My Indestructible Superhero Team) now bears the name *The Indestructibles*, and is shaping up very nicely indeed.

In very simplistic terms, Bullfrog's tribute to the caped crusaders of yesteryear is a superhero combat game that takes place in one of the most realistic city environments ever developed. Players must create and design their very own band of Superheroes using a range of different powers and techniques and then battle with other Superheroes while defending their city. (In other words it's like that bit in *Superman II* where the man of steel beats the shit out of General Zod and his two cronies.) Being superheroes they naturally have the ability to pick up cars and buildings to throw at each other, or they can settle for hiding in the foundations and generally running amok about the place, at the same time trying to avoid injuring innocent bystanders and causing too much irreparable damage. All in all it's another totally original and fab game from Bullfrog that we just can't wait to play.

The Indestructibles is scheduled for release in December from Bullfrog.



From the heart of a hero...

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You are lord of the skies. Bestride your magic carpet, wielding an arsenal of spells, you have fought your way through the outer realms and faced numerous inhuman foes.

Your greatest challenge awaits you...

26 awesome spells, each with 3 deadly levels of power.

- A faster flight experience than ever before.
- Negotiate doom-laden night levels and plunge into the bowels of the earth on cavern missions

TIE Fighter Collector's CD

LucasArts has recently announced further details of the forthcoming *TIE Fighter Collector's CD* which includes an enhanced version of the original chart-topping game and its first add-on campaign *Defender of the Empire*.

Improvements cover upgraded graphics, enhanced sound and more than 5,000 lines of studio-recorded dialogue (and heavy breathing). The CD also features 22 new missions (raising the total to 104!!) and the new campaign includes three battles, a new 3D rendered intro and four new cut scenes. To run the game in hi-res mode you'll need a 486DX (at least) with a local bus video card, a dual-speed CD-ROM drive and 8Mb of RAM.

The *TIE Fighter Collector's CD* is due for release in November and will be published through Virgin Interactive Entertainment.

Dispatches

+++ Quad-speed Blaster Package
Creative Labs has recently announced details of a new multimedia upgrade kit and software package. The SoundBlaster Discovery CD 4x kit includes an internal quad-speed IDE CD-ROM drive, an 'industry standard' SoundBlaster 16 audio card and stereo speakers. As for the software, well there's 18 titles in all, including *Wing Commander Academy, Ultima VII, Populous II and Ultima Underworld*. The package, which retails at around £300 (plus VAT) represents good value for the serious gamer seeking performance and compatibility who is also keen to boost their CD-ROM collection. Available from all the usual outlets, contact Creative Technology on 01734 344322 should you require further details.

+++ PC is Tops
According to a recent survey carried out by Packard Bell, children and teenagers in computer-owning families voted the PC as the most advanced games platform currently available (over 55%). Sega came a lame second with 20% of the vote, while Nintendo crept in near the bottom of the pile with just 2.5%. No respondents mentioned the much hyped Saturn or PlayStation.

Almost half of those interviewed claimed that they spent between three to five hours each week on their PC, a quarter admitted to up to ten hours, while nearly 20% revealed that they spent more even more than that in front of their monitors wearing down the mouse mat. Almost half of the respondents said that they spent most of their time playing games on their PC. What we'd like to know is – what were the rest doing?

+++ Easy Internet Access
Get on-line and explore the World Wide Web the easy way, courtesy of a new Internet access package called WorldWindow.net and modem from The Internet Group.

Priced at £199 inclusive, the package includes a 28,800 BPS Electronic Frontier modem, WorldWindow Personal Internet Access software, a registered copy of *Paint Shop Pro*, three month's unlimited Internet connection time and a personal e-mail address. The subscription rate is £15 per month (plus VAT), which provides unlimited connection time while the number of lines serviced should guarantee immediate connection 80 per cent of the time. For details contact The Internet Group on 01295 720517.

+++ L-Test CD-ROM
New from Europress Software is a multimedia product designed to help learner drivers pass their driving test first time. While *Driving Instructor* doesn't pretend to replace the real thing, it attempts to make learners more aware of road and traffic issues and offers advice on how to be a safe and responsible driver; there's even a special section devoted to security and women drivers. *Driving Instructor* is out now from all usual outlets, priced £19.99. Contact Europress on 01625 859333 for information.

Alien Odyssey

LOOKING GOOD AND DUE FOR RELEASE NEXT MONTH IS PHILIPS' new action-packed blaster *Alien Odyssey*, which has been developed by Argonaut.

Looking not unlike *Cyberia*, it blends lush graphics, high-speed animation, puzzles and of course shoot 'em up action with a rich plot that centres around the hero Psaph and his tiger-skinned mate Gaan. The game features high speed hover bike chases through forest bits (*á la Return of the Jedi*) and tunnels, walk around and shoot things bits (*á la Cyberia*), as well as loads of puzzles. It also looks rather stunning, as you can see from the splendid screenshots.

Look out for a full review of *Alien Odyssey* next month.

Gene Wars

NO, IT'S NOT A FIGHT BETWEEN LEVIS and Wrangler, it's a brilliant new strategy game from Bullfrog that has you dabbling in cyber-genetic warfare, creating new creatures and trying to restore harmony to a planet plagued with treachery and violence.

No weapons are allowed, so the player has to disguise their squad as harmless animals that then morph into vicious killing machines once they get the scent of the enemy. *Gene Wars* boasts stunning SVGA graphics, a wicked artificial intelligence, will feature a multi-player network mode and is due for release by the end of the year. Apparently, no animals were harmed in the making of this game – hoorah!

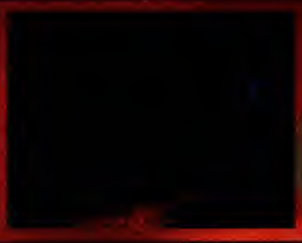
To the land of a demon...

He's waited for an eternity.

He is Vissuluth
the Dark One, Lord of the Netherworlds. He has feasted on the souls of those condemned to his accursed kingdom and become powerful, with a legion of servants at his command.

His hour has come round at last...

- 20 species of dreadful beasts do the Dark One's bidding.
- Vissuluth's 7 demonic servants match you for speed and skill.
- Network play allows up to 8 players to test their carpet-piloting prowess simultaneously.



Kingdom O' Magic

SCI HAS STOPPED MOWING the lawn and developed a brilliantly funny new point-and-click graphical adventure called *Kingdom O' Magic*.

The game points a jokey finger at just about every adventuring cliché and 'stars' the totally delectable Shah-Ron, one of the bustiest heroines ever seen in an adventure game. Players can opt to play either Shah-Ron or Sidney the Snakeman (voiced by comedian John Sessions, pictured below right) and depending on which role you decide on, the story and characters act differently, which means that you can play the whole game twice and get something different each time. *Kingdom O' Magic* also features three different quests, over 90 'intelligent' player characters, 105 in-game locations, a beautifully rendered 3D environment and, thanks to a rather clever and sophisticated AI, it's virtually impossible to repeat the same gameplay.

Kingdom O' Magic is due for release some time in December from SCI.

Dispatches

+++ Animé Movie News
The live-action movie starring Jean Claude 'The Muscles from Brussels' Van Damme and Kylie 'Please take me seriously' Minogue may have been a disastrous flop, but that hasn't stopped *Street Fighter II – The Animated Movie* from being launched on Monday 2 October. The film met with instant approval when it was premiered in Japanese cinemas last autumn, and has since become the single-most requested video in Manga's history. Directed by Gisaburo Sugii and produced by Kenichi Imai in association with Capcom and Sony Music Entertainment, the video will retail for £12.99 and is expected to carry a video certificate rating of 15. For further information ring 0181-747 9080.

+++ No More Lemmings
Psygnosis, sorry Sony Interactive, has revealed that the-really-rather-good-if-you-like-that-sort-of-thing *3D Lemmings* will be the last Lemmings puzzle-based game to be released. That's not the end of our furry friends however - fear not, they will be appearing in future projects currently in development at 'Chez Lem' and there's still talk of a cartoon show, comic strip, casual clothing line and a tie-in with the Conservative Party. Long live Lemmings (or not, as the case may be).

+++ In Search of Porn
According to a recent survey, almost half the people using the Internet do so to look for pornographic material. A study of over 19,000 accesses revealed that 47 per cent were in some way connected to erotic pictures, film clips, literature and sounds (we're not entirely sure exactly what's meant by the last item!). The Professor who conducted the survey appealed in the national press last month for tighter restrictions and urged parents to be vigilant at all times.

+++ *Heart of Lateness*
The spectacular *Heart of Darkness*, which was due for release later this month, has now slipped back behind schedule a further three months and won't be available until early next year. The stunningly animated cartoon-style interactive movie has already kept Amazing Studios busy for over three years and features some of the best animation and rendered scenes ever seen on the PC. Unofficially described as the sequel to the bestseller *Flashback* (as is EA's *Fade To Black*), a spokesperson for Virgin maintained that it will definitely be worth the wait.

+++ Z Ready Soon!
Z, the frantic top-down battle simulator from the Bitmap Brothers, is just about ready to ship. It now looks better than ever and features more cut scenes, weapons and scenarios, and there's even talk of adding a four-way network play option that will allow two teams of two to play against each other. Look out for a full review next month.

Tomb Raider

EVERYBODY BUT EVERYBODY SEEMS TO BE DEVELOPING THIRD-person perspective action/adventure games at the moment, and Core is proving no exception with its latest release.

Tomb Raider features a fully 3D light sourced, 3D texture-mapped game environment, loads of polygonal characters with which to interact, an 'intelligent' cinematic camera system and a progressive plot, while over 2000 frames of animation make the lead character Lara Cruz move better than Pamela Anderson. Unfortunately *Tomb Raider* won't be available until well into next year, but if what we've seen is anything to go by it's worth looking forward to and we should be in for a treat come the spring.

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Now they bring you Magic Carpet 2, the sequel to last year's PC Game of the Year. The graphics are even more glorious and the action a non-stop sensory assault. There's a Help Mode, a mid-game save feature and an SVGA mode.

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For more information about Magic Carpet 2 call 01753 549 442, email uk-support@ea.com, or write to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 835, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8XU • Magic Carpet is a trademark of Bullfrog Productions Ltd. Electronic Arts and the Bullfrog logo are registered trademarks of Bullfrog Productions Ltd.

Dispatches

+++ Lose Those Ellipsoids
Andrew Spencer has stopped singing the praises of ellipsoids (as used in *Ecstatica*) and has opted to go with texture-mapped polygons instead for his next project, *Urban Decay*. But fear not, although it has put the project back a little, Andrew is confident that the change will be worth it, and from what we've seen, *Urban Decay* looks like breaking the mould of 3D shoot 'em ups forever. Let's just hope the censors don't get cold feet and ban all the gratuitous violence and swearing.

+++ Novalogic Product Shock
US developer Novalogic is branching out and planning to release two new products within the coming months. The first, provisionally entitled *Fixed Wing*, is a combat flight simulator that looks rather stunning, and the second is *Kill Suit*, a 3D third-person perspective shoot 'em up adventure that features superb texture-mapped graphics and brilliant character control. More details on these two as we get it.

Time Commando

THE BODS AT ADELINE HAVE BEEN VERY BUSY OF LATE. NOT ONLY are they frantically putting the finishing touches to the *Little Big Adventure II* (yep, Twinsen is back to save his planet from the Black Monk, with brand new puzzles, spells, a multitude of new external camera angles, additional objects and textures on screen), but they've also been working on a new project entitled *Time Commando*.

Set far in the future, the player controls a computer repair man come accidental hero chap who must travel through ten different time zones ranging from prehistoric, mediaeval Europe, Samurai-ruled Japan and the American Wild West. As the player progresses he gets to use more advanced weapons, which is not really much of a bonus as he then comes up against increasingly aggressive and sophisticated enemies in his search for a computer core located in another dimension.

Character control (like *LBA*) is very easy to get to grips with and relies on just four direction keys and two action keys, while the hero as well as the enemies and weapons are all in glorious realistically lit, texture-mapped, gourard-shaded 3D SVGA. It's all in real-time of course, and just so your machine doesn't buckle under the strain of throwing around all the hi-res animation and 3D Studio/SGI rendered graphics, it uses a special routine which constantly adapts to the available CPU bandwidth for ultra-smoothness. Smart.

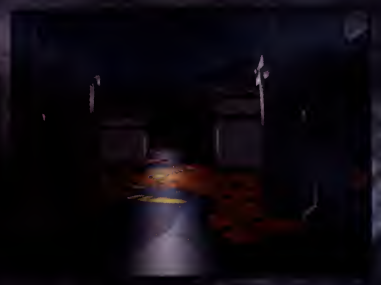
Time Commando is due for release in February next year.

Pro Pinball – The Web

Empire Interactive has just released details of a brilliant new next generation 3D pinball series.

The first table in the *Pro Pinball* series, mysteriously entitled *The Web*, features a number of 'see everything viewpoints', a thumping soundtrack, in-game speech, a super high resolution of up to 1025x768 with over 64,000 colours and a blistering 60 frames per second frame rate – it's altogether a massive improvement over the more common top-down, scrolling affairs.

The Web table features dozens of different game modes, bonus arcade games, over 100 3D-rendered sequences, three flippers, two ramps, loops, targets and a six-ball multi-ball feature that will leave you dizzy. More tables are on the way soon, and you'll get the chance to see how brilliantly playable it is for yourselves when it is released in November.



Resurrection (Cyberia 2)

Virgin has signed up the rights to the sequel to the award-winning *Cyberia* from Xatrix, which was originally published by Interplay.

Resurrection will feature a 'revolutionary' combat engine, and to keep everyone hooked new difficulty parameters that are adjustable to suit both the novice and hardened pro, plus advanced Transfighter Engine Technology for endless random enemies, new Hot Zones and loads of puzzles. The game will also make use of new motion capture technology for ultra realistic characters, and will include options of hand-to-hand combat and gun battles.

Resurrection is due for a November release.

Dawn Patrol Link-up

The long awaited head-to-head dogfight dueller from Rowan is now finally available for free (if you own the original *Dawn Patrol*), or for just under 20 quid for the complete new game.

The new improved version uses an enhanced flight model for greater realism and features a head-to-head mode, improved enemy AI, new Q-sound so you can hear as well as see from which direction you're being shot at, a new quick and easy install system that automatically sorts out the SVGA mode, and a whole host of new sound effects including screams, dive noises and fly-by distance samples.

Dawn Patrol Head-to-Head is available now from Empire Interactive.

Shock Wave Assault

It caused quite a bit of a stir when it was released on the 3DO, and now *Shock Wave Assault* looks set to do it all again when it's released for Windows 95.

Shock Wave Assault is being pitched as the first 'Hollywood-style' (whatever that means) action game to be available for the shiny new OS. It takes advantage of the AutoPlay feature, so when you stick the game in the drive it installs itself automatically and runs within Windows 95.

What's more, the developer claims that many of the 3D effects used in *Shock Wave Assault* simply wouldn't have been possible under MS-DOS or Windows 3.1, and that as a direct result of the new and improved multimedia technology, features such as streaming video are now possible on the PC, while *Shock Wave Assault* also runs faster, with improved graphics and sound under Windows 95.

So what's the story? Well, the year is 2019 and the orbital space carrier, UNS Omaha, is orbiting the Earth acting as an experimental space platform for testing the new F177 space fighter prototypes. Without warning the planet is bombarded from space by a devastating alien attack, all the Earth's defences are wiped out and it's up to the rookie pilots to fly in to try and salvage the situation.

Shock Wave Assault is due for release in November from Electronic Arts.

Get Abused

Crack Dot Com has almost finished work on its new platform game, endearingly entitled *Abuse*. The press release we received didn't tell us anything about the game whatsoever, so we don't know what the plot is – but it's probably about being an absolute hero and having to save the world from certain destruction, with strange alien types coming to Earth and giving everyone a hard time.

The game itself is standard platform fare: you jump up and down levels and shoot everything in sight. Although the graphics look a bit dated, there's some pretty cool sprites in it and the Beta version we played turned out to be very addictive. If it wasn't for the presentation, Crack Dot Com could have had a totally top game on its hands. There is likely to be a shareware version of the game so you can have a blast and decide for yourself, but this has yet to be confirmed. *Abuse* will retail at £37.99 and the distributor is giving away posters of the game while supplies last. There's also an SVGA option which will be in the finished version and we'll have a full review next month. If you need more details contact Gaming Central on 01624 861233.

Road Rash

The one good reason to own a 3DO has disappeared into a puff of smoke now that *Road Rash* is to be released on the PC.

The smash hit title, which at the time of its release was seen to be one of the ailing console's saving graces, features fast in-yer-face graphics and a thumping rock soundtrack from the likes of *Soundgarden* and *Therapy?* lashed onto oodles of gameplay and slick video. And just in case you're interested, 'Road-Rashing' is the term given to high-speed, anything goes, outlawed motorcycle racing, where gutsy riding and fists can make all the difference between finishing first and chewing the tarmac. *Road Rash* is not just yet another racing game – it makes the arcade bits in *Full Throttle* look like Andy Pandy riding a tricycle.

Road Rash will be released on the PC by the end of the year by Electronic Arts.

»

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The Battle Continues

« THE THIRD EPISODE IN THE *BATTLE ISLE* SAGA IS ALMOST COMPLETE. *Shadow of the Emperor* (*Battle Isle 3*) shows a vast improvement in terms of graphics over the last game in the series. Those totally smart 3D animated battle sequences now look even better and the whole interface has been changed to make it extremely easy to use.

All the windows in the game can now be moved around and re-sized, so gamers can effectively create an interface that suits the way they play. Speaking of windows, the game is a true Windows 95 product (it's a genuine 32-bit mode program) so the posh new graphics won't crawl on your machine. This is also the first game in the series to use flashy multimedia bits and there's over an hour of video with digitised speech which provides strategically important information, helps keep you up to date on the plot, and generally makes it all a bit nicer to look at.

Shadow of the Emperor can be played by up to six players over a network, and there will be at least eight multi-player maps included in the game, which Blue Byte hopes to release later this month. For more info contact Blue Byte on 01604 232200.

AH-64D Longbow

AS EXCLUSIVELY REVEALED IN LAST MONTH'S *PC ZONE*, ELECTRONIC ARTS has signed an exclusive five year licensing deal with military publishing giants Jane's.

The first products released under the new brand are *AH-64D Longbow*, a helicopter combat simulator that allows the player to take part in historical conflicts such as 'Desert Storm' (Iraq) and 'Just Cause' (Panama), as well as a number of random missions that take place throughout the world, and a full-out campaign against Ukrainian troops in the Baltics.

The other release, *Advanced Tactical Fighters*, is a modern jet combat simulation based on experimental fighter aircraft with radical designs and weaponry. Players will be able to perform extreme manoeuvres in dogfights and use super stealth abilities for deep penetration strikes against enemy forces and strategic targets. There's also talk of a head-to-head option.

Both titles will feature accurately modelled avionics, advanced 3D visuals in fully texture-mapped SVGA and photo-realistic terrains and are due for release in December from Electronic Arts.

Space Hulk II

In-yer-face action and a fair dollop of strategy comes onto the PC in the form of *Space Hulk II*, which has already been hailed as the most absorbing and atmospheric recreation of the Games Workshop cult creation to date.

The new version of *Space Hulk II* is based on the special 3DO sequel, which was launched to critical acclaim earlier this year and features a super detailed, full-screen 3D environment, fully ray-traced animated Genestealers, an impressive enemy AI, and a special training mode to help novices get into the game as quickly as possible. The product, which is being pitched as 'The thinking man's *Doom*' is due for release on the PC in January from Electronic Arts.

Oi Hill! No!

Now you can follow the movements of Britain's top Formula One racing driver thanks to MicroProse, who has just announced a new alliance with Damon Hill that includes a new web site.

The result is that users will be able to keep fully up to date with the Renault team and follow Hill's progress throughout the year, even during the closed season when critical car testing is taking place.

If you want to find out what's going on, the address for Damon Hill's Web Page is: **http://www.microprose.com./damonhill**

Should you have any difficulty contact MicroProse on 01454 326532.

Ocean on the Offensive

Ocean is working on a host of products at the moment, including *Iron Angel*, a futuristic flight sim in which your battle for air supremacy takes place not only on Earth, but in space too. The game takes place in the distant future where conventional warfare is a thing of the past and advanced aircraft can fly just as easily in space as on Earth. Four superpowers are battling it out for total supremacy and you play a peace-making do-gooder who has to set the world to rights. Hopes are high that the game will be in the shops before Christmas.

Football Limited is an all-new football management game currently under development at Ocean which combines the best elements of football management games with a comprehensive business management system. Players can get as deeply involved in the financial and business side as they like, right down to setting the price of hot-dogs on match day, as well as overseeing the usual stuff like team selection and tactics. Match representation will include close-ups of all the exciting goal-mouth action to make the matches really tense. *Football Ltd* is set for a November release.

Also on the way is *Offensive*, a strategic wargame set in World War 2 which takes all the best elements from games like *Sim City*, *Dune 2* and *Cannon Fodder* to produce something totally top. The action is viewed from a 3D isometric perspective and includes a zoom feature so that players can change views from aerial battles right down to where their foot soldiers are. *Offensive* will be out in November.

If you're into wargames but find the simplistic presentation of the majority of them off-putting, you might want to take a look at *Silent Steel*, a submarine sim that puts the player in control of a ballistic attack sub which carries a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying the entire planet. The game has over three hours of full motion video which outlines the plot and comes on four CDs as a result. *Silent Steel* should be out at the end of this month. For more details on any of these releases contact Ocean on 0161-832 6633.

An Extra Quid? Bastards!

As you've probably noticed, the price of the magazine has gone up a whole quid this month. Unfortunately there's absolutely nothing we can do about this, but I feel that I really ought to explain the reason behind it.

Traditionally, when editors write little snippets in the news justifying a price rise, more often than not they sound like arrogant arseholes who are simply covering up the fact that the price has increased to bump up the profit returns. Usually we get something along the lines of 'the possibility of VAT on books and magazines, ooh isn't the Chancellor a bastard, boys and girls?' (VAT still isn't charged on magazines in case you didn't know), or some other suitably limp explanation. No, the reason that *PC Zone* has gone up in price is because, unfortunately, it has to. For the past 31 months *PC Zone* has cost a quid less than all of the competition, and as I'm sure you're aware, we've always endeavoured to ensure that the mag is by far the best. The norm in this market seems to be £3.99 for a floppy issue and £4.99 for one with a CD – we wanted to undercut this. The problem is though, this is no longer viable as there is currently a world paper pulp shortage. Due to changes in both supply and demand the paper suppliers have been forced to increase paper costs by a massive 30% and it expects to have to make further increases in 1996. On top of this, printing costs have also increased quite dramatically.

To try and compensate for this we are looking to find ways of making the *PC Zone* package a more desirable one. Over the next few months we are trying to bring you promotions sponsored by software houses so that we can include FREE second CDs and floppy disks. This month we are pleased to bring you a second disc courtesy of Ocean Software, on which you will find demos of the firm's Christmas line-up of games. In future we will also be bringing you the now infamous *PC Zone* keyboard overlay EVERY month and further free items and reader offers whenever possible.

Well, there you go. Hopefully that didn't make me sound too much of an arsehole. I dunno, go out and plant lots of trees or something.

John Davison, Editor »

Midway Blues

Mystery, murder and intrigue are the hallmarks of *Bad Day on the Midway*, a new adventure game scheduled for release this month from Warner Interactive. This is the sequel to the award-winning *Freak Show* CD-ROM and is produced by the same team.

The game has dynamic navigation which enables the player to act out the story in different ways. The plot is said to be complex, allowing for a variety of different narrative outcomes, and the graphics are well up to standard from the demo we were shown; this was at the ECTS and it looked very pretty except, er, there didn't seem to be anything to do in it, but that could just be us being cynical. Either way, you can find out for yourself when we review it. Or you can phone Warner, who can tell you how great it is.

One product we *can* get excited about is *Sensible World of Soccer*, which looks as though it may finally see the light of day in November. The game has over 26,000 players, 144 preset competitions and a 20-season management option. It also has new rendered sequences to make it look all, er, flash, and extensive commentary from Jonathan Pearce. You can get the gen on these games by ringing Warner Interactive on 0171-391 4300.

DI Takes On Westwood

Digital Integration has entered into a business partnership with German developers Software 2000 and has announced the imminent release of its first titles from the company. The biggest release looks likely to be *Space Marines*, a strategy game not entirely dissimilar to the excellent *Command & Conquer* from Westwood. The game puts you in control of a futuristic army at a time when mankind has colonised the universe. Big nasty robots are roaming around killing any humans they can find and to make matters even worse, a mysterious alien force is on its way to join in the fun. *Space Marines* will hopefully be out before Christmas.

The first game you are likely to see from the new partnership however, is *Ocean Trader*, which as you've probably guessed is a trading game set on the high seas. It features SVGA graphics, CD music, 100 ports with 32 different goods and of course all the usual statistical information that always comes with these things. The game should be out by the time you read this and we'll have a full review of it next issue.

This will be followed by the release of *Talisman*, an interactive movie thing with lots of interactive movie type features such as movie sequences in SVGA, 3D characters and real-time animation, real-time phong shading for the characters (*Eh? – Ed*), and over 60 interactive locations. Also in the pipeline is *Archibald Applebrooks Big Adventure*, an adventure game with thousands of comic animations, SVGA graphics and digitised speech for all the characters.

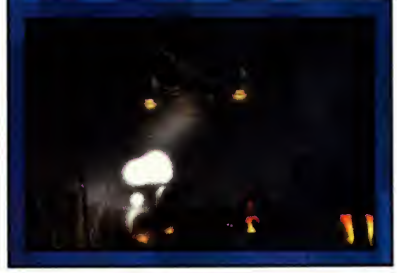
For more details on any of the games give DI a ring on 01276 684959.

Fantasy Doom

Yet another *Doom* clone is currently in development at US Gold. This one is called *Witchaven* and takes place in a huge underground labyrinth.

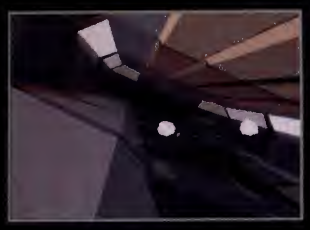
To be honest, with its use of medieval weapons and blokes wearing dresses, the game is probably more similar to *Heretic* than *Doom*. Developer Capstone has licensed Apogee's Build engine to design the game with, and while it looks pretty good from what we've seen, it's still got stiff competition coming its way in the form of *Heretic 2 – Hexen*, which looks rather spectacular. The game features SVGA graphics and the play area is said to be absolutely enormous. *Witchaven* will be out at the end of this year.

Still in *Doom*land, US Gold will be releasing *Terminator: Future Shock*, a new game inspired by the movies of the same name. Basically another *Doom* clone with a few more features than normal, the developer has tried pretty hard to make this one a bit different by giving you the ability to explore buildings, destroy terminator outposts and even drive and fly a fighter plane. *Future Shock* has 20 different 3D textured enemies, a mission-based level structure and should be in the shops before Christmas. Finally, a game from US Gold that has no *Doom*-like bits in it whatsoever, namely *X-Car: Experimental Racing*. It's a futuristic racing sim which puts you in the seat of a hi-tech automobile, or if you like you can design your own car using the portfolio of advanced race components. The game features eight accurately rendered race tracks and ten detailed imaginary tracks and should be out in December.



DARKER

Blinding....



Available on PC & CD ROM

AT HOME WITH... COMPRO GAMES

"Fancy a free holiday in Israel?" asked *PC Zone*. "Excellent!" replied Duncan MacDonald, stupidly forgetting to ask if there were any strings attached. Read on for the full story...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT – A FREE THREE-DAY holiday. Amazing. And guess what, I'm standing behind BBC2 *Top Gear* bloke Jeremy Clarkson at the ticket desk. I'm so starstruck I feel giddy.

Tel Aviv Airport

Blimey, a minibus is waiting to take me to my hotel. A massive coincidence here, by the way: there are five other computer journalists on the minibus, all going to the same hotel as me. "I'm here on a free holiday," I tell them. They tell me that they're here to work... to trek around an Israeli software company called Compro Games. "Bad luck maties," I think to myself.

That evening

I meet up with the journos from the minibus and we hit the hotel bar. A 'drinking game' begins. And it continues, big time. At five in the morning everyone staggers to the lift, disembarking floor by floor to play a game of 'where's my room?'. My last semi-coherent thought, as I drift into unconsciousness on the bathroom floor, is that at least I can get up late... like at about a hundred o'clock.

Oh no!!!

"Ring ring ring." It's just a sort of distant dream. "Ring ring ring." Now it's a tad more vivid. I try to ignore it. "R-i-n-g!!" I drag myself across the floor, pull the telephone to the ground and grunt a couple of syllables into the mouthpiece. "Hello, it's Eric Yifat here," the earpiece replies. It adds that I'm meant to be in the lobby, and everyone's waiting. Completely and utterly confused (I'm not even sure where I am), I clamber to my feet and waddle liftwards, groaning.

Welcome to Compro Games

A minibus ride later and the 'working' journos and I reach the headquarters of Compro Games. We sit down and listen as intently as is possible as Eric (the bloke who woke me up) explains a little about his operation: Compro Software Systems Ltd was established in 1985, and specialised in the development of communications systems and scientific and engineering applications. The computer games side is now dealt with by the subsidiary, Compro Games. Eric is keen to point out that many of the Compro software specialists cut quite a few of their programming teeth in the Israeli military forces (indeed, Eric himself was a major in the Air Force).

He asks if we're familiar with the game *CycleMania*. "We are." That was a Compro game. "We know." Did we like it? "Yes, it was quite good." And on and on until it's time to have a gander around the HQ and at three of the games Compro is working on right now.

My holiday is going horribly wrong! *PC Zone* has tricked me. I want to be sunning myself on the beach.

CyberQuest

We look at the pictures on the monitor as a rather nice Compro Chick gives us an overview and a brief outline...

"It's a fully explorable, 3D graphic visualisation of Cyberspace in which the player has 360 degree scope of vision," she says. "Here's the story. You're pit-pattering about in your family basement when you stumble across a peculiar helmet attached to an old computer. You realise it belongs to your dad. You don the helmet, and suddenly you..."

"Suddenly you find yourself in a game that's a bit like *Myst*," I think to myself. I then hear the Compro Chick mention the word *Myst* herself, pointing out that while it was always a very enjoyable game, it was somehow rather 'barren'. She goes on to explain how *CyberQuest* will have 'moving sprites' and 'personalities' and whatnot. Then she returns to the plot, which is so complicated that my brain stem begins to implode. Her command of the English language, however, is superb – even if she does speak it with an American accent. When she finally wraps up I decide to congratulate her.

"You speak excellent English," I say, smarmily.

"I'm American," she replies.

Oh.

Space Runner

Next we're shown a space game. The plot is duly explained, and my brain stem begins to implode again: "Enter a solar system ruled by the Lynx Corporation... omnipotence... until Professor Ralwin secretly invents... teleporters... one hitch... travel across the solar system... only with multiple jumps... experimental spacecraft... discover the evil surrounding Lynx Corp... reach each teleporter gate without being destroyed..."

And on it goes. I know the drill already, as do you. Shoot, kill, reach objective. Oh, and power-ups. I ask if I can have a go, and I can. Goody goody, I can show off. I bag a very distant enemy craft with a single photon cannon blast.

"Excellent shot," says someone.

"It was nothing," I reply, obnoxiously.

"But it's not just about shooting things," says a Compro bloke, in the mistaken belief that I'm getting bored. "It's also about tactics. There's a non-linear plot, and while you can ignore certain objectives, you'll find that things become increasingly difficult as a result." He goes on to explain about the superior AI routines of the enemy and the line-of-sight stuff. Then he inputs a password and skips through the six different worlds, which all look equally good. "And there's one landscape," says the Compro Dude, "which will be purely for multi-player games. No computer enemies, just other people."

"Where's the toilet?" I ask.

"Down there," he says, pointing.

I scuttle off for a violent chunder.

Soul Hunt

We've all been given lunch, during which I just sat there quietly gagging. Still, this is the last game, and it's only half-finished, so maybe it'll be quick and painless.

"Peach Town is a small, quiet, Southern town set among ancient ruins," begins the Compro Geezer. "And in this sombre landscape, a festival that re-enacts ancient rites is..." He goes on for an age.

From what's being shown on the monitor, *Soul Hunt* looks like two games spliced together. One part is a *CycleMania*-style driving between locations affair, in which the player vehicle is a kind of armed jeep. The other part of the game contains the puzzley bits – the locations where you look for magic items and general spooksome stuff to help you in your quest. Think *Myst* again. Or maybe not – *Soul Hunt* isn't complete enough to tell, but Compro has really got this video technology malarkey together .

Jerusalem

After another night of heavy drinking, we're taken on a tour of the walled part of Jerusalem and I can't help thinking that, essentially, it's like the Whitgift Shopping Centre in Croydon.

It's the last day...

Another heavy night of alcohol abuse, another unfeasibly early start, and a visit to The Multi User Game Channel. It's a Tel Aviv cable TV network jobbie that Compro is involved in, whereby you subscribe and get the chance to compete head to head in various games with other users. *CycleMania* is one of the games currently on offer, but the others look a bit naff. It has to be said that it does herald the future, though, because whereas with modem play (*á la Doom* etc), where gameplay gets slower and jerkier as more people log on, with this cable stuff you can have a zillion players – or two zillion even – and it doesn't slow down one jot.

Going home

Three days in Israel, and I've managed to get precisely five minutes in the sun. Meanwhile the UK is still having its heatwave. Bah! Some holiday. Still, all is not lost. I did manage to learn a highly useful sentence from my English/Hebrew Book: 'Bahadar-ha-yeladim yesh halon gadol vedelet'. Its meaning? 'In the children's room there is a big window and a door.' **Z**

(Left) And my camera was nicked at the airport on the way home...

(Below) So the only visuals left were three slightly creased flyers that somehow made their way to the bottom of my bag. Art Ed Jason has placed them all at a 'rakish' angle for added artistic effect.

Seen enou mindless violence?

Take a closer look.

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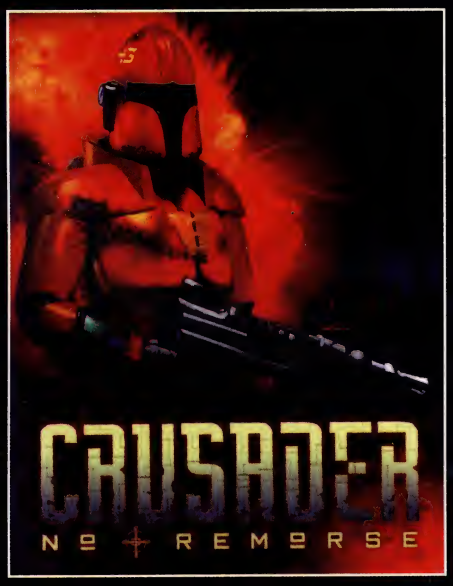


Visit **Electronic Arts** and **Origin Systems** on the WWW at **http://www.ea.com/**

ORIGIN

ugh

For more information about Crusader, please telephone 01753 546 465, email uk-support@ea.com, or write to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 835, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8XU • Software ©1995, Origin Systems Inc. • Crusader is a trademark of Origin Systems Inc • Origin is a registered trademark of ORIGIN Systems, Inc • Electronic Arts is a registered trademark of Electronic Arts **System Requirements:** IBM PC CD, 486/50 Intel 486™ or 100% compatible systems, 8 Megs RAM, 10 Megs Hard Disk Space

Believe it or not, *Hexen* is the sequel to *Heretic*, which was a sort of sequel(ish) to *Doom*, which was just a little bit successful... in case you didn't know. John Davison takes a good look at the new *'Doom-in-Tights'*...

IN PRODUCTION

Hexen

HANG ON A MO'. HOW CAN WE HAVE a sequel to *Heretic* when the first game never actually came out in the shops? What's going on? Have iD and Raven just copped out, called it quits and started again? Well, for those of you who've been looking out for *Heretic* but don't really know what happened to it – it was actually a product that you could only obtain by using two methods:

A Registering the shareware version
B Sending off for it via mail order.

Either way, it was an overbearingly average game and, not surprisingly, no one went gooey over it. Our ever-witty and devastatingly knowledgeable reviewer (well, okay, Macca) awarded the game 78% when we got our hands on the thing, and basically concluded that he'd rather play *Doom*. The fact that he'd rather play *Doom* than rub baby oil all over Cindy Crawford is beside the point. The point is, this was a game that relied on iD's *Doom* engine and er, sort of didn't quite work out.

So what's the point of a sequel?

Everything's different now though. The *Heretic* name has been shed in favour of the new *Hexen* moniker, and the boys at iD and Raven have come up with something which is hoped will truly do justice to the idea that *Doom* would be really rather good if you turned it into a fantasy RPG sort of thing.

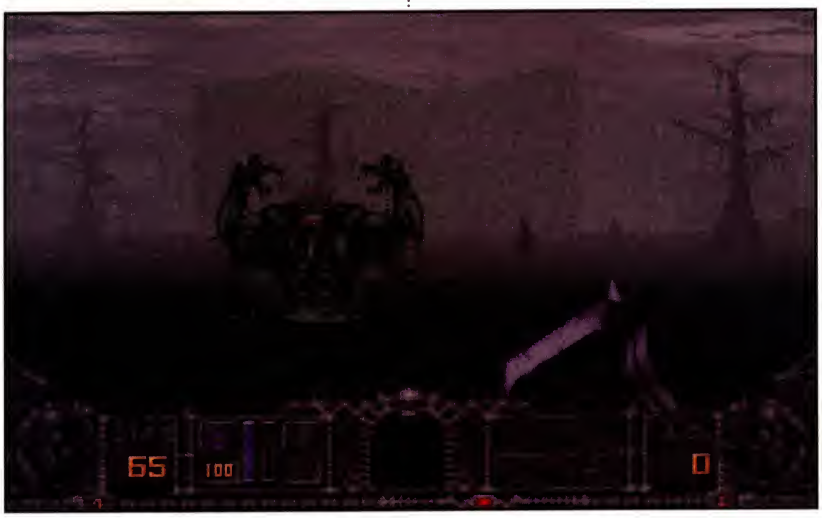
As with any game that relies on fantasy elements, *Hexen* is chock-full of people with silly names with nowhere enough vowels in them. As with the original game, all of the action takes place in a world where the forces of magic prevail and evil beings dominate. Korax, the new bad guy, is yet another of the Serpent Riders (just as D'Sparil, the bad bloke in *Heretic* was) but he's quite confident that he's significantly more powerful than all that have gone before him. In an attempt to assert his dominance, Korax has tried to enslave all of humanity, and has succeeded thus far with the exception of three warrior heroes.

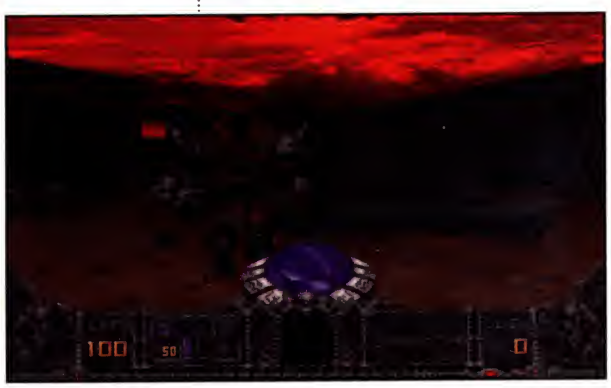
As you can probably guess, when you enter the world of *Hexen*, you can choose which of these warriors you want to be and then run around beating up monsties in the style of your choice. As with 'normal' RPGS the three classes of warrior have differing abilities and these vary from the out and out toughness of the Warrior, who predictably is expert at beating people up, to the mysterious Mage who is a bit of a girlie pouf who lobs pretty-looking spells at people from a long distance. Obviously for the Librans among you who can't decide between brawn and magic there's the Cleric, who's a bit good at magic and has the ability to put up a reasonable fight if the opportunity arises.

Whatever you choose though, the addition of these classes of character adds a number of elements to the gameplay. Obviously there's the fact that Raven is keen to turn *Hexen/Heretic* into something more akin to a

(Below left) The new monsties are jsut a bit scary, especially when they jump up out of the swamps like this one.

(Below) The monsties are really quite smart too, and tend not to pixellate as much as the ones in *Doom*. They are still sprite-based rather than the polygon-based monsters found in *Quake* though.





Product details

Developer: Raven/iD Software
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171-258 3791
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

'real' RPG and secondly there are the netplay implications. Throwing yourself into a Deathmatch situation in which there are a variety of different styles of fighting means that the whole thing has the potential to be, well, a bit more fun. The Warriors can stomp in beating the crap out of everything while the Mages can hide behind a tree and wave their arms around a bit.

New bits

As you'd expect, this isn't just a new storyline with a few extra poncey characters. No, *Hexen* is quite an exciting prospect at the moment as it is our first glimpse at a next-generation *Doom* engine. The chaps at GT Interactive are keen to impress that the *Hexen* 3D engine isn't just a rehash of the *Doom/Heretic* system. What we have instead is a hybrid of *Doom* mixed with some of the new ideas found in *Quake*.

Excited yet? Okay, so it's not the full SVGA monty with all the flash stuff that we talked about at length in our *Quake* feature last month, but what it does have is a whole new array of graphical goodies which include transparent smoke (*á la Magic Carpet*), new lighting effects, fuzzy wobbly bits and (gasp!) dynamic scenery. Yep, now you can run around among the trees and admire the autumnal effects of tumbling leaves. Ah. To be honest, these little extras make a tremendous difference and prove that the engine is progressing with each new release we see from the *Doom* boys.

Obviously, aside from the graphical effects there are all sorts of new weapons to play around with and, unlike previous games from iD, these are charged up using *Magic Carpet*-style Mana. And it's interesting that one of the basic weapons on offer is a dirty great big Thor-style war hammer. Hmm... wonder where that idea came from? Maybe *Hexen* is closer to *Quake* than we all think?

(Above and left) The blue sparkly hands weapon looks particularly impressive. The dorky Warrior obviously can't use it.

(Below) Check it out... a big sword with lots of green, sparkly, magic stuff glowing around it.

"Hexen *is quite an exciting prospect at the moment as it is our first glimpse at a next-generation* Doom *engine; it also has a new array of graphical goodies."*

Coming soon

What is most surprising about the announcement of *Hexen* is that it's actually very nearly finished. The version that we saw for this particular *Blueprint* was very stable indeed, even if it included only a couple of levels. It certainly looked very impressive and was considerably more playable than *Heretic*. Quite what the finished game will be like still remains to be seen, but we're looking forward to seeing it – there's a very good chance that this could end up being *'Doom-in-Tights'* good and proper. **Z**

Personal Computer World
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Best Sound Card
Sound Galaxy WaveRider 32+
April 1995

PC Plus
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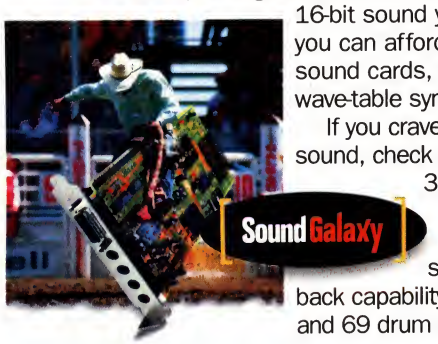

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1994 MULTIMEDIA WORLD READERS' CHOICE FINALIST

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The Dig

***PC Zone* proudly combines the talents of LucasArts, Steven Spielberg and Chris Anderson to bring you, er, a preview of *The Dig*.**

Product details

Developer: LucasArts
Publisher: Virgin
Telephone: 0171-368 2255
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

A VERY STRANGE FEELING CAME OVER me while I was playing the demo version of *The Dig*. It took me a while to figure it out, but finally I realised what it was: I'd completely forgotten what it was like to play a real adventure game. I've become so used to playing unspeakably crap interactive movies that the prospect of something which actually required me to think was very disorientating indeed.

I've since decided that if I come across one more game that uses lots of pretty FMV to try and impress me yet fails to deliver the goods in the gameplay department, I shall phone the software house responsible and point it in the direction of the LucasArts team, who will hopefully give the culprits a good talking to and, perhaps, teach them a lesson or two about the ancient art of creating interesting, amusing and playable adventure games.

The actual demo version of *The Dig* is not very extensive, with only a few locations to wander around and a couple of puzzles to solve; however, even in the short time it took me to work my way through it I was hooked and got straight on the phone to Virgin demanding to know when the finished version would be ready. This game oozes atmosphere from every pixel, with excellent voice-overs, colourful graphics and the promise of the kind of highly addictive gameplay we've come to expect from the ridiculously talented chaps and chapesses at LucasArts.

(Above) Oh look, it's er, a ghost thing.

Asteroids ahoy

The plot revolves around three characters: your alter ego Commander Boston Low, a NASA veteran in command of geologist Ludger Brink and journalist Maggie Robbins. Their original mission is to blast an asteroid from an unstable orbit around Earth into a stable one. But surprise surprise, things don't quite work out as planned. »

(Left) Maggie finds some giant crystal... (insert what you think they are here).

(Below) I told him not to look in there.

Play the demo on our cover disc

Simply the best

LucasArts has more or less cornered the PC adventure game market. Its first big game was *The Secret Of Monkey Island* which, along with its sequel, can still hold its own against todays' graphically superior adventures simply because it contains side-splittingly funny humour and a hilarious plot. *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* is the only game I can think of that managed to combine adventure and arcade game elements and get away with it. *Day Of The Tentacle, Sam And Max* and, more recently, *Full Throttle* proved that no one can match LucasArts' skill at creating adventure games. The good news is that most of these products are now available on Virgin's budget label, so if you've missed any of them you can go out and buy them at bargain prices.

(Above) Er, I think this is an intro bit.It's pretty though, isn't it?

« The asteroid transforms into an alien spaceship and the team are transported to a strange and seemingly abandoned planet. Upon exploring their dangerous new environment, they discover they are not alone. Everywhere they turn they find evidence of an alien species, which has apparently discovered the secret of immortality and now exists in a ghost-like state. The aliens desperately want something from the unlucky trio, and the only way to get back to Earth is to give it to them. Your objective in the game is to discover what the aliens want from you, make sure they get it, and hopefully get safely back to Earth.

Looks familiar

In terms of look and feel *The Dig* is very close to the classic *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* adventure game. Because of this, some people may find the graphics a little dated (pretentious wankers may start whinging about the fact that the game doesn't have digitised characters and lots of crap FMV clips), but as far as I'm concerned, it's gameplay that matters and *The Dig* looks like it will be positively overflowing with the stuff. A simple and intuitive interface gives you easy access to your inventory at all times and manipulating objects is an absolute doddle. A nice new feature is the ability to get to locations very quickly just by double-clicking your mouse, as opposed to having to wait impatiently while your characters walk there. Generally, the whole game feels fairly similar to the original *Indy* game which, as far as I'm concerned, is no bad thing.

However, I don't want to give you the impression that the presentation is lacking in any way. LucasArts combined its technologies with Industrial Light and Magic artists to create several special effects for the game; these are used to jazz up the visuals for asteroids, planets and alien ships. As well as that, morphing techniques, lens flares, prism effects and warping star fields have been employed to make the game visually impressive.

Famous person alert

The incredibly successful combination of the considerable talents of LucasArts and the extraordinary imagination of Steven Spielberg has resulted in a very atmospheric game indeed. Spielberg particularly wanted to capture the alien feel of *Forbidden Planet* and the humanity of *The Treasure Of The Sierra Madre*. LucasArts was excited by this idea but its main priority was to produce something very playable.

This was confirmed by Sean Clark, the games project leader: "It's been an incredible experience to take an idea from Steven and then craft a game of this magnitude around it. Since Steven is an avid gamer, my team and I made story and gameplay our top priorities".

LucasArts claims *The Dig* is even bigger than its *Indy* adventure, which makes it its largest project to date by far. From my brief encounter with it I can honestly say that it looks as if adventure fans will finally have something to shout about, after having been inundated with boring interactive movie thingies. We'll be bringing you a full review in the next issue of *PC Zone*, but in the meantime, you can have a look at it yourself by installing the demo from this month's cover CD. Z

(Right) Cut scene city.

(Below) There's more! This one's an incredibly moody cut scene thing.

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Formula One Grand Prix Manager '95

Duncan MacDonald likes racing games rather a lot, but unfortunately he only drives a crappy old Volvo. Quite how this justifies his looking at an F1 management game is a little unclear.

HERE'S THE BASIC GUIDELINE FOR A writer (of any magazine that is, not just *PC Zone*) who's about to do a *Blueprint* of a game: "Be at least mildly optimistic, and enthuse if you think it viable".

And that's about it, really, because in the cold light of day the nuts and bolts of any previewed game are still going to be scattered on the oily floor of the 'programming garage'. And *Grand Prix Manager* is no exception. In other words, I haven't actually played the thing. And neither has anyone else.

So where does that leave us now? And the answer to that question is pretty simple: it leaves us to speculate. So, for starters, let's survey the screenshots. Have a squizz at them yourself and then rejoin me. (I'll still be here, don't worry.) Had a look yet? A good look? They're not particularly mind blowing, are they? It looks a bit like a hi-res Impressions game. But, having said that, management sims very often look a tad cheesy. (If I had a penny for every time I've seen one of the *PC Zone* footy management freaks sitting in front of what looked to me like a spreadsheet, I'd now have... er, about 40p.)

But what exactly will you be able to 'do' in *Grand Prix Manager*? Well, according to the information I *do* have, it sounds like heaps. You can play the game in 'cry-baby' mode, whereby you buy into an existing team which already has many of its parameters defined, and then take it from there: allocating percentages of your budget to different R&D departments, poaching better drivers and whatnot.

Product details

Developer: MicroProse
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 326532
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: October

The full race distance...

Alternatively, and this is going to be what 99.9% of players will be wanting to do, you can go the whole route. Put simply, you'll start from scratch, and will have to avoid finding yourself in the Lotus Position (and I'm not talking about yoga). You're going to be the big bad boss, basically, and what you do with your pretty large initial budget will be entirely down to you, as will what you do with any profits. You've got to get the balance right between spending on pure hard-edged technology and the homo sapiens who will make up your team. For instance: you've spent zillions on four Renault Ninjas, but seeing as your chief mechanic is Joe Bloggins from Croydon Auto Repairs & MOT Centre, there's every chance you won't get the best out of them. Especially as you can only afford one driver...: and it's Taki Inoue. *("Oh no!" – A reader.)*

But there's more than just the cars, the mechanics and the drivers to worry about. Raising sponsorship, for example – and with Joe Bloggins and Taki Inoue on board, this might not be a cakewalk. There are 'men in suits' to hire as well, and security people, and on and on and on. Money might get so tight that you can't afford enough tyres, and will have to send Taki out in a backfiring Renault with three slicks and one low profile radial ('borrowed' from your own Mondeo). Once you do have a not-too-shonky team up and running, however, there are still going to be plenty of ongoing struggles, not least of which will be team tactics. Yep, you'll be in the thick of the action down at the trackside as well, and dramatic 'cut scenes' during races are promised.

Oh, and by the way the whole thing is intended to link together with *F1GP2* for the complete experience of driver/manager. Excellento.

If MicroProse really has gone to town on *Grand Prix Manager* (personality clashes? Inter-team espionage? Fatalities?), it could really be the dalmation's donuts. For added ultra-realism, though, I know what I'll be doing... (a) changing my name by deed poll to Frank Williams, (b) injecting all four limbs with novocaine, and (c) getting a friend to operate the mouse for me as I watch from a chair. Spiffo! Z

(Right) Well, that's sorted Damien's car out nicely (and yes, I know it's Damon). A fair bit of wing and a one stop strategy, on lap 29.

(Far right) Now for Schumacher. Ha ha! We've got him starting the race on qualifying tyres, so his first stop will have to be on lap three. (The bastard.)

PC ZONE

EF2000 is one of the highest scoring games we have ever featured. Not only is it bloody good though... it's also a bit complicated. This keyboard overlay covers most of the most commonly used keys in the game.

SPACE	FIRE WEAPON	[ ]	ENGINES ON AND OFF
ENTER	SELECT AA WEAPON	+ -	THROTTLE UP AND DOWN
DEL	SELECT AG WEAPON	* /	AFTER BURNER ON AND OFF

HUD VIEWS	WIDE ANGLE COCKPIT	CHECK YOUR SIX	PLAYER EXTERNAL VIEWS	WINGMAN EXTERNAL VIEWS	FLY-BY VIEWS	TARGET VIEWS	WEAPON VIEWS	BROWSE PLANE VIEWS	PADLOCK VIEWS			

SHIFT AND ESCAPE TO EJECT

1 WINGMAN 1 MENU	2 WINGMAN 2 MENU	3 WINGMAN 3 MENU	4 WINGMAN 4 MENU	5 WINGMAN 5 MENU	6 WINGMAN 6 MENU	7 WINGMAN 7 MENU	8 WINGMAN 8 MENU	9 WINGMAN 9 MENU	0 PREVIOUS MENU	- THROTTLE DOWN	= THROTTLE UP	AG WEAPON

EF2000

This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *EF2000*, published by Ocean Software/DID. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by Ocean Software/DID.
All rights recognised.

- THROTTLE DOWN	+ THROTTLE UP			ENTER AA WEAPONS
* AFTERBURNER ON	9 SCROLL VIEW RIGHT	6 HORIZON & COMPASS	3 MFD 3	. GAME MAP
/ AFTERBURNER OFF	8 HUD VIEW	5 IRST	2 MFD 2	0 BRIEFING SUMMARY
	7 SCROLL VIEW LEFT	4 WARNING PANEL	1 MFD 1	

A AUTO PILOT	S AUTO LAND	D SELECT DAS		G GEAR UP/DOWN	H ARREST HOOK	J SELECT JTIDS		L AUTO LEVEL		' REFUEL MODE			ENTER AA WEAPON	
	X BREAK	C CYCLE	V NIGHT	B AIR	N NO	M MAPS	SPACEBAR FIRE		, RUDDER	. RUDDER				

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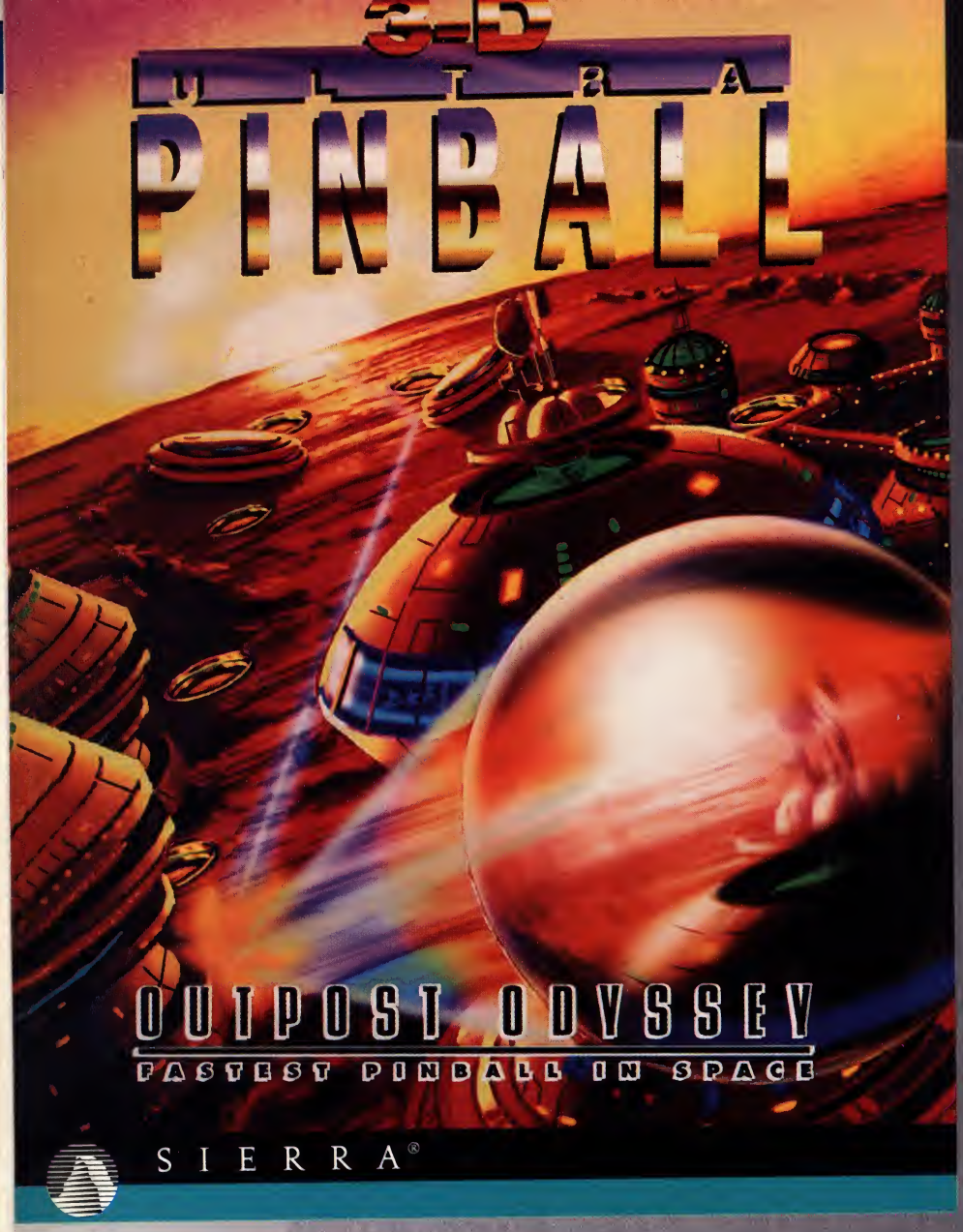

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Mortal Kombat 3

All good things come in threes. Well that's what we told Charlie Brooker when we sent him off to take a look at the new fisticuffs fighter from Williams.

MORTAL KOMBAT DOES FOR TEENAGE boys what *Take That* do for teenage girls. Both groups of followers do the same things. They both scream with delight whenever they see their heroes. They both stick posters of them up on their walls. They both buy endless streams of related merchandise. They both know their favourite character's life history, and everything else about them too. Furthermore, the aforementioned 'characters' in *Mortal Kombat* were once real people, who through the wonders of digital camerawork have been transformed into super-athletic electronic sprites – just like *Take That*.

But that's where the similarities end. For while *Take That* capture the hearts of pubescent girls nationwide by singing delicate pop platitudes about the bittersweet anguish of adolescent love (and also by baring their arses onstage), the cast of *Mortal Kombat* win over their fans by the more gruesome method of ripping out each other's ribcages with their bare hands. What a far happier world it would be if the two groups swapped places. We can but dream.

Anyway, as you've probably guessed by now, it's *Mortal Kombat* time again. It's been out in the arcades for quite a while, but now it's made the inevitable ascension from coin-op to desktop. Yup, it's back, it's pissed off, and it's headed our way... ladies and gentlemen, a big hand for *Mortal Kombat 3*!

Intestine... one two three

Did I say THREE? Does this mean we should all get rather excited? After all, the original *Mortal Kombat* was sort of all right, but its sequel was twice as good – a rule that applied equally well to both the coin-op and the PC versions. If the *Mortal Kombat* quality curve is going to develop an aesthetically pleasing camber, this latest helping should be at least three times as good as the first. Getting a bit mathematical, a sort of *Mortal Kombat* cubed, as it were.

And cubed is exactly how most of the digitised cast end up – not to mention diced, sliced, peeled, deboned, and left to simmer on maximum heat for 30 minutes, turning occasionally. If you fancy ripping your friends to pieces (and you can do that over a network or modem with this PC version – yippee), then *Mortal Kombat*'s yer man.

Because where would *Mortal Kombat* be without the gore, eh? It'd look stupid, like an unusually violent episode of *Rentaghost*. The 'splat factor' which made Mortal Numero Uno so popular and controversial was upped considerably in the second of the series, so logically you would expect this new incarnation to be even more blood-sodden. And you'd be right.

The few of you who are unfamiliar with the *Mortal Kombat* series will be blissfully unaware of the inclusion of

(Right) Shang Tsung gives Cyrax a good kicking with his explosive underwear.

(Above) Shang Tsung gives Cyrax such a beating that his hand now hurts an awful lot.

Product details

Developer: Williams
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171-258 3791
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

'fatality' moves. These are extremely complex to perform, requiring the dexterity of a concert pianist, the memory of a Kray super computer, and the timing of a male West German porn star. But when you do manage to actually pull one off (the fatality, not the porn star) you'll damn well know it. See the 'Why I Oughta...!' panel to see exactly what I mean.

Still, it isn't all blood and guts... there are other, sillier moves to perform too. *Mortal Kombat 2* introduced 'Babality' moves (in which your opponent changes into a baby, of all things, for reasons way beyond the realm of normal human understanding), and 'Friendship' moves (in which instead of killing them, your character does something pleasant to the relieved victim). You'd be just a tad gutted if there wasn't a new one in *Mortal Kombat 3*, wouldn't you?

Ooh, you beast, you

Well, your gut can rest easy because now there's 'Animality' moves! Hurrah! Remember that mid-'80s action programme – the most preposterous piece of entertainment ever – called *Manimal?* The one starring Simon McCorkin-something as a bloke in a safari jacket who could turn into animals at will simply by breathing deeply through his nostrils and staring at the back of his hand? Well, performing an Animality move is just like that, except whereas Manimal turns into wildlife with the express purpose of righting wrongs and wussy stuff like that, you'll be turning into bloody great lions and chomping away at your screaming victims just for the sheer sadistic buzz of it. Oh, and there's loads and loads of other secret hooh-hahs hidden away in the game – and the arcade die-hards out there can breathe a sigh of relief because they've all made it to the PC version as well.

But what about the quality of the overall conversion? Is it going to be enough to make you finally give in and actually buy that PC gamepad you keep promising yourself? Wellll... the evidence so far looks promising; it runs at the same speed as the original, it's got a network option, and since each fighter is loaded straight into RAM there shouldn't be any 'grinding hard drive' misery during play. So how does it play?

Er... If you'll excuse me for a moment, I'm just going to open up my special reviewers textfile, jam-packed with handy generic sentences for use in a tricky situation like this. Ah, here we are, under the heading 'For Use in Previews'. You don't mind if I just paste this in verbatim do you? My wrists ache.

"Well, as you can see from the screenshots, (insert title of game) certainly looks the business, but to find out whether it truly lives up to everyone's expectations, you'll have to wait until we review the finished version in an upcoming issue."

Now get! G'wan, get! And don't you dare come back 'til next time! **Z**

Why I Oughta...!

Ahh. Remember that zany early-'80s Video Nasty boom? When headlines screamed about *'Driller Killer'* and *'I Spit on Your Grace'* as if they were referring to an unseen army of the dead instead of a series of cheap, tawdry exploitation flicks bunged out onto VHS? Welcome to the '90s, where we like our gory death sequences to have that 'interactive' touch. Here's just a taster of some of the nastier 'fatality' moves awaiting your approval in *Mortal Kombat 3*:

- **Death by lightning**
- **Death by skin-peeling**
- **Death by giant boot-stomping**
- **Death by shark attack (I'm not making these up)**
- **Death by plummeting *Mortal Kombat 1* arcade cabinet**
- **Death by gas-powered full body inflation and eventual bursting**
- **Death by whirling head-mounted rotor blade (my personal favourite)**

Le Tissier picked for England!

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PC ZONE

The game football fans wanted!

FIFA Soccer

It's a game of two halves... But more important than that (football cliché, football cliché... John Motson... Ian Wright... Arsenal... Longball killing the game... Matt Le Tissier... England selection... *FIFA 3DO*...), it was another footballing cliché alert in the *PC Zone* office thanks to Jeremy Wells, much to the dismay of all around him.

(Right) This is football, not American football – let's hope the yanks (okay, Canadians) have learned something about the game after hosting the World Cup.

(Far right) Presentation is top class, thanks to new Virtual Stadium technology. At last the PC version looks as good as *FIFA 3DO* – with any luck it plays as good as it looks.

I WANNA TELL YOU A STORY. WAY BACK when (I can't remember how long, but it must be at least a couple of years because Ipswich were still in the Premier League), a colleague called Tony rushed into the office in a state of great excitement, with a large Argos carrier bag tucked under his arm. Before I could construct a sentence using the words 'cheap' and 'tacky', he'd pulled out a Mega Drive and a copy of *FIFA Soccer*. His face fell instantly when he saw my look of disgust. We'd just got two new PCs in the office (everyone else had Amstrads and were suitably jealous), and I was introducing him to the delights of *Doom*, *SimCity*, *Sensible Soccer* et al in an attempt to lure him away from his nephew's SNES.

I almost had him. *SimCity* saw him phoning home to the wife with the excuse that he was 'snowed under', when really he was trying to work out how to pipe water in from a reservoir the other side of a mountain. I'd even let him win at *Sensi* (I was using the keyboard) and take a few frags off me playing *DeathMatch*. It was all going perfectly, and then he goes and buys a bloody Mega Drive. Berk.

"What's that?" I enquired, ripping out the serial link from the back of his machine and snatching back my Gravis gamepad from his desk.

"It's a Mega Drive."

"I know what it is, stupid. Why?"

"You're not gonna believe this..."

"You're right there."

"Well, I was walking down the High Street and wandered past Argos..."

"So far so good. But don't tell me – then you fell over and smashed your head on the pavement, and when you came to, to your astonishment you had a Mega Drive under your arm?"

"Well, not quite. You see, I saw what I thought was a televised footie match on a telly in the shop window."

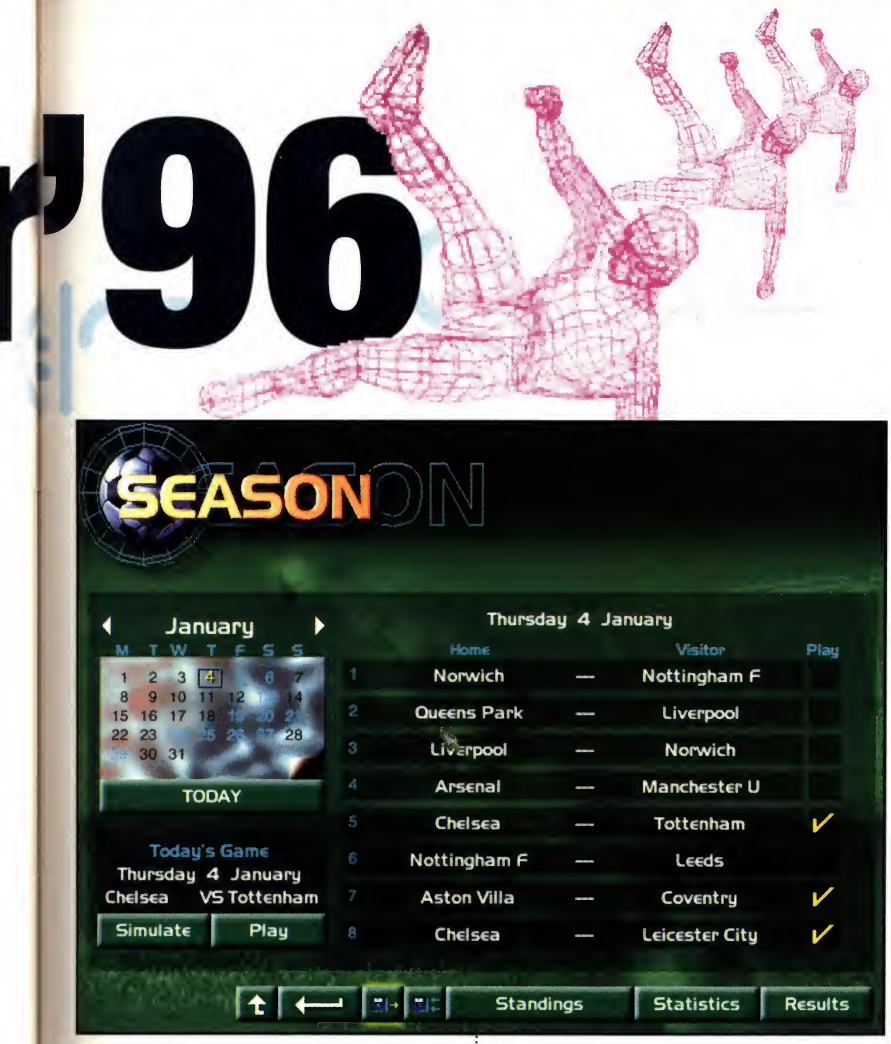
I nodded and gave a wry smile.

"And when I got closer, I realised it was actually a running demo of a computer game. Can you believe it?"

"No, I can't."

"It was, no shit! I went inside to see what it was running on – I thought it must be some new PC (this was blatantly a crap attempt at trying to butter me

IN PRODUCTION



up, and he knew it!) and it was a Mega Drive. I couldn't believe it! So I bought a Mega Drive and a copy of *FIFA Soccer* there and then. It looks awesome! I can't wait to get it home."

Later that day I sneaked out to Argos to see this miracle for myself, and yes, I had to reluctantly admit that it did look pretty tasty. It didn't make me want to buy a Mega Drive, but I was impressed nevertheless. I didn't tell Tony, I just hammered him at *Sensi* every lunchtime for the next three weeks (in other words, I made him use the keyboard).

Jackasnorey

Yeah well, maybe, but the point I was trying to make through this little story (it worked for Jesus...) was that *FIFA Soccer* was, and always has been, a bloody good-looking game. I'll admit that on the Mega Drive it was even quite playable, although it didn't have that grab-you-by-the-(foot)balls appeal and level of control of *Sensi*. The PC conversion was, well, let's just say I didn't dare let Tony see it, let alone play it, he was better off with his console. I honestly tried to get on with it, but it just left me feeling more frustrated than Matt Le Tissier.

EA Sports wouldn't officially confirm that this was the general consensus, but it did admit that it wouldn't hurt to make a few changes. If it could produce a half-playable version for the ailing 3DO, surely it could create something magical for the PC second time round?

One engine for all

The biggest problem with *FIFA* on the PC was that it didn't really play like a football game. The players seemed to have their own agenda and you never really felt that you were in control as they leapt about the pitch, tackling players, making weird passes and diving about in the box doing overhead kicks. Another big problem was that although it looked good it was pathetically slow, even on a high-spec machine. The only tactic seemed to be to get the ball, run with it for as long as you could and then bang it, long range at goal, and hope for the best. It was quite possible to score from the halfway line (Nayim-style), even when you couldn't see the goal and as the game itself was so slow following the ball, you'd never actually see it fly into the back of the net, just hear the crowd roar with approval. Okay for Arsenal and Wimbledon fans maybe, but distinctly lacking in any real skill. Other games in the series, *World Cup Rugby '95* and even *NHL Hockey* suffered from the same

(Far left) Spot the ball. Goalies come out and drag you (Schmicel-like) to the ground.

(Left) Breakdancing on the pitch is still not recommended until half-time.

Jack of all engines

EA Sports has spent ages working on super-flash new presentation routines and creating a gaming engine that enables you to view the play area from almost any angle, throw detailed sprites around at a fair old whack and make the sound realistic. Once it's all up and running, it then has a model that can be used for most sport sims that involve two teams running around a pitch (or court) attempting to score a goal (or basket) – this is Virtual Stadium technology. Change the grass to ice, tweak the engine a bit, and you've got yourself an ice hockey game. Swap the ice for a court and replace the goals with baskets and you've got the makings of a basket ball game. Smart, huh?

Well, yes and no. Smart for EA but maybe not for the end user, who ultimately ends up with variations of the same game, albeit with alternative graphics and a few gaming tweaks. It stands to reason that a game engine designed to run an ice hockey game is not necessarily the best place to start when you want to produce a footie game. Let's hope they change the engine to fit the game and not the gameplay to fit the engine.

(Above left) Teams now include real player names and there's a management buy/sell option too. Mind you, it's last seasons' teams, so no Gullit, Platt, Ginola or Bergkamp.

(Above) You need Stubbs and McAteer.

(Above right) Moving into space – the player you are currently controlling will have a circle beneath him with an arrow to show direction of travel.

(Below) Motion capture and some polished animation mean the players look and move realistically.

(Below right) As if!!!!

(Below far right) Yay! That's more like it!!

« symptoms, it was just that it seemed even more noticeable with *FIFA*. Consequently, if the games were to become more playable, some new technology was in order.

And that's why EA Sports has developed a new 3D engine thing that will (supposedly) change the way sports games look and play forever on every format; enter stage left Virtual Stadium technology (see panel previous page).

Now, super new technology that makes things look nice is all very well, but when you see what VS does and why EA Sports has developed it, it leads you to wonder whether it's about to make the same mistake twice – in other words, nice presentation, shame about the gameplay. True, eight different camera angles, motion capture technology, lush animations and a rivetting commentary from John Motson all combine to add weight to a game, but if half the camera angles make it too difficult to play, and players insist on doing their own thing at the most inopportune moments, then come back *Sensi*, we still love you and your basic ways.

Product details

Developer: EA Sports
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 01753 549442
Format: PC CD-ROM
Release date: November

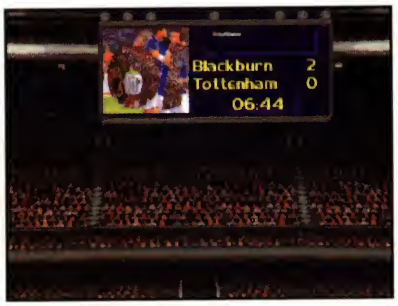
On the other hand...

Yeah, it's still early days, and a 20 minute play of a Beta version was encouraging. You can't fail to be impressed by the presentation of it all, the intro, music, animations, player options and graphics, and then on top of that EA Sports has incorporated loads of new league options and special moves to heighten the whole gaming experience. It's faster than it was, it's less intense in midfield, keepers come out rather than hang back on the goal line (which means more goal mouth action) and the seamless commentary by Motty is just tops – the best we've ever heard. They haven't quite finished putting in the finer points yet, such as corners and free kicks, and when you run away from the ref after a foul, he doesn't chase you (boo-hoo).

This time round original player names have been included, and because you can see more of the pitch it's easier to make long passes and run with the ball. A sprint feature is going to be added so you can Kanchelskis-it down the wing, short passes are now a reality and overall, you feel a lot more in control and less of a vision mixer. On the down side however, to get the full commentary you're going to need more than 8MB of RAM (basically, the more RAM you have, the more John says) and the AI still needs a bit of work to get the game flowing – but EA's working on this, so fingers crossed.

All in all, *FIFA '96* is still not quite as hands-on as *Sensi*, but it's getting there and it still looks gorgeous. If Konami can produce a game that looks good and plays well on the SNES, surely EA Sports can do the same on a Pentium with 8MB of RAM? We shall see. Z

BEHIND THE SCENES



SLIGHTLY LESS SAFE THAN JOINING THE MILE HIGH CLUB BAREBACK WITH A JUNKIE WHORE IN A PLANE FLYING OVER A WAR ZONE WITH THREE ENGINES ON FIRE A PISSED UP PILOT AND CARLOS THE JACKAL SITTING RIGHT BEHIND

YOU.

MORTAL KOMBAT® 3

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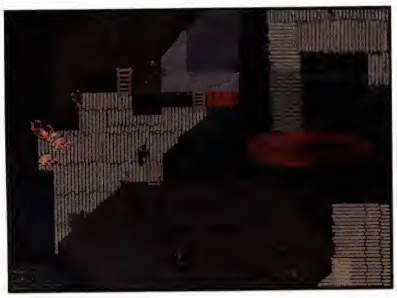
Waterworld

Chris Anderson went to Chelsea to see Intelligent Games' new strategy venture and, er, got completely lost.

TOP TIP NUMBER ONE: IF YOU'RE GOING to get lost, whatever you do, don't do it around the Kings Road where there are lots of weirdy people walking about eyeing you suspiciously because your hair isn't spiky and dyed 200 different colours.

Top Tip Number Two: if you do manage to get lost around said area, don't ask anyone for help because they'll either send you the wrong way or they'll think up a street name at random (complete with bogus directions), no doubt chuckling to themselves afterwards at their incredible sense of wit.

You may have guessed by now that I got completely, totally and utterly lost on my way to visit Intelligent Games. By the time I finally got there I had seen all of Chelsea (and some other bits of London, too) and I felt as though I'd walked about 100 miles (probably because I had). This was not the start to my adventure I'd hoped for, but thankfully, upon my eventual arrival, I was greeted by Intelligent Games' PR girl, Marven. Suitably sympathetic, she whisked me off for a goodly feast, where I took the opportunity of boring her silly with my tales of misadventure in darkest Chelsea.* She asked me if I felt up to taking a look at *Waterworld*, IG's new strategy game based on the already outrageously successful movie. As that was what I was there for, off we went.



Product details

Developer: Intelligent Games
Publisher: Interplay
Telephone: 01235 821666
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

development for Electronic Arts, although unfortunately it couldn't be more specific about the title or nature of it. It's quite astonishing – all this from a company who only arrived on the game scene in March this year.

So what's the secret of its success? According to the people at IG, the company's policy is to create games from the bottom up. This basically means that it concentrates on the gameplay first, making sure its products have real depth before moving onto the graphics and sound. It often develops playable prototypes at early design stages which can be shown to potential publishers, who can then see the game's depth and appeal right from the start.

"IG creates games from the bottom up, concentrating on gameplay first and ensuring its products have depth before moving onto the graphics and sound."

From tiny acorns...

Having been under the mistaken impression that Intelligent Games was a small company with a handful of developers, I was more than a little surprised after being shown around its buildings. Not so! The offices are spread across two large houses, with several development teams beavering away on different projects. Walk into one office and you'll find programmers putting the finishing touches to *Sim Isle*. Walk into another and there's a different set of people working on *Azrael's Tear*. Further on, Beta testers are working on *Ticonderoga*, Intelligent Games' first release which is now being converted for Windows and Mac platforms.

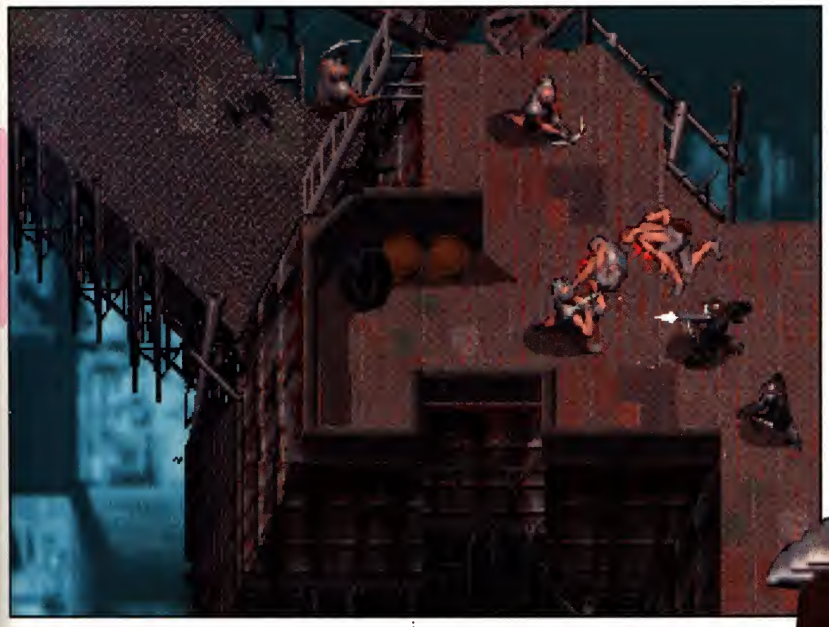
Publishers who have already signed up the talents of the IG team so far are Mindscape, Interplay and simulation giants Maxis. It also has a game in

IG's commitment to gameplay over gloss is immediately evident in *Waterworld*, which features real-time non-stop action right from the word go, while at the same time managing to contain hidden layers of depth which the player will come across the further he gets into the game.

The plot, of course, is spookily similar to the movie and places you in a futuristic environment where the polar icecaps have melted and literally turned Earth into 'Waterworld'. The remaining members of Earth's shattered populace now exist on floating towns called atolls. Their lot is a sorry one – a constant struggle of survival and an endless search for vital resources such as food, soil and drinkable water, all of which are naturally very scarce.

(Right) The game features characters from the movie.

(Opposite page) The development team behind *Waterworld*.



(Left) *Waterworld* features non-stop action and lots and lots of blood. Hurrah!

(Below) So you fancy a fight, eh? Er, so does my mate – hang on while I go and get him.

Smokers can be bad for your health

To make matters worse than they already are, a bizarre cult called the Smokers constantly attacks the inhabitants of the atolls, stealing their resources and generally just looking for an excuse to have a good ruck.

Your role in the game is that of an atoller (ie someone who lives on an atoll – good that, innit?). You start off with a meagre amount of men at your command and a limited amount of resources and your task is basically to make sure you always have enough food and so on, while beating up anyone you don't like the look of. The game is played from a top-down isometric viewpoint and increases in difficulty with every mission (you get less men and resources as you go on).

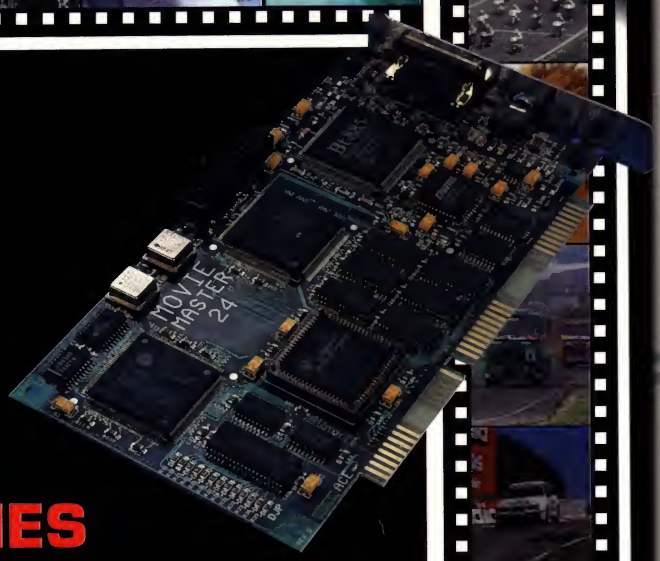
At first glance, *Waterworld* looks like a simple shoot 'em up in which your objective is to simply kill everything on each level to progress to the next. But after playing for a while you soon discover that the game also has strong strategic elements; you can increase your chances of success by researching better weapons and bartering to get supplies of goods you're running short of. This is the resource management side of the game, but you won't need to spend much time on this at the beginning – it becomes much more important when you've got into some of the later missions.

Graphically, *Waterworld* is far superior to most other games of this type I've seen (and I've seen a lot of them!). The sprite movement is very smooth and the backgrounds are well drawn and look very atmospheric. There's a very detailed SVGA mode (which is tops if you have a big monitor), or a VGA mode, which I much preferred because the sprites are very large and realistic. *Waterworld* will also have a multi-player option, 25 minutes of video-linking missions using actors, props and actual sets from the film, and night-time missions which limit the players' immediate vision and increase the general atmosphere and tension.

Waterworld looks like another winner for Intelligent Games; we'll bring you a full review as soon as the finished product comes in – watch this space! Z

BEHIND THE SCENES

*(Paul Presley, native of Chelsea, would like to assure everyone that it's a nice place really, with a low crime rate.)



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***This Means War* is a top new real-time action strategy-fest from US developer Star Jammer. It looks just a bit like *Command & Conquer, Z, Waterworld* and nearly every other game being released in time for Christmas. Jeremy Wells went looking for the wood in the trees (or something).**

This Means War 95

WHEN IT COMES TO STRATEGY games, MicroProse has the indisputable reputation of King Of The Castle. *Transport Tycoon, Civilization, Colonization, X-COM* – all classic games guaranteed to keep you going well into the small hours without even a whiff of Prozac or Red Bull.

At the moment you can't move for real-time strategy wargames: *Command & Conquer* from Westwood, *Waterworld* from Intelligent Games and 'Z' from the Bitmap Brothers look quite superb; they are all jostling for attention ready for the Christmas rush, but that hasn't stopped MicroProse from entering the fray with the first product from US game designer Star Jammer. Let's just say that it's playing this one cool, and remaining quietly confident that it can produce something on at least equal terms.

This means what exactly?

Well, it's distinctly *Mad Max*-ish (as is *Waterworld*) and set in a futuristic post-apocalyptic hell type scenario that involves wombling round the wilderness looking for junk that can be recycled and put to good use (ie it can be used to smash the shit out of your opponent). And why does the world now resemble Canary Wharf on a Sunday afternoon? Well, it would appear that a computer virus has infected the entire world-wide information network, and as a result mankind has been plunged into anarchy. Resources are scarce and concentrated in certain areas, and minor warlords are now involved in a bitter power struggle as they vie for control of the metal, oil and weaponry of pre-crash times. In other words, it's like trying to buy food for a picnic or fishing trip late on a Saturday.

Anyone who is remotely familiar with the concept of trying to buy a baguette in Sainsburys so you can have a bacon sarnie while watching *Baywatch* or *Superman* will no doubt revel in this real-time battle tank simulator that has you pitting your wits, tanks and resources against an opponent ('real' player if you're playing over a network, or CPU-controlled if you're not) who is trying to do the same as you – ie take over an area, set up a base and then use its resources to strengthen your campaign so you can go and beat the hell out of someone else. There are over 40 campaign scenarios in all, that get progressively difficult as you, er... progress. What's more, as it's all in real-time, it gets pretty intense once you have your mines, refineries and truck routes on the go. This kind of wargame is a million miles away from your plodding hex games of old and there's not an anorak in sight.

This means SimCity, Transport Tycoon and UFO

But it's not all fight, fight, fisticuffs, oh no. There's a large dollop of strategy in there too. To win the player must carefully use limited resources to construct vehicles, weapons and ammunition, take over territories and gradually build up their army so that they are powerful enough to destroy their enemy's HQ before they themselves are wiped out. Developer Star Jammer has spent ages getting the AI spot on and working on a learning curve that's guaranteed to get you hooked after just a couple of minutes. The SVGA graphics are impressive, there's loads of animations, explosions and linking bits, the vehicle and weapon designs are so cool they probably live in an icebox and the user-friendly Windows interface makes it very easy to get into. On the downside, you will need a 486DX (at least) with 8MB of RAM, but when a game's got this much to it, you can't really expect anything less. Z

Product details

Developer: Star Jammer
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 326532
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

Play the demo on our cover disc

IN PRODUCTION

(Below left) SVGA graphics, real-time action and a head-to-head option should make *This Means War* an instant hit with armchair generals.

(Below) Isn't it amazing what you can make out of a couple of old toilet rolls and some sticky backed plastic?

Visit EA SPORTS on the Web at http://www.ea.com/ • For more information about PGA TOUR 96, call 01753 546 465, email uk-support@ea.com, or write to Electronic Arts, P.O. Box 835, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8XU
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Legend has got a bit of a reputation for producing some of the best looking graphical adventures around. Jeremy Wells reckons you'll say "Crikey!" when you see this *'Star Wars* meets *Star Trek'* strategy adventure spectacular.

Mission Critical

IN PRODUCTION

Product details

Developer: Legend Entertainment
Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Telephone: 0171-368 2255
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: November

(Below) "Your name's not down, you're not coming in!" – Seamless FMV combined with...

(Below right) ...gorgeous 3D-rendered graphics make this a prime contender for the award of 'Best Looking Game Of The Year'.

THE YEAR IS 2134. THE EARTH IS A war-torn, battle-scarred shell in a permanent state of interstellar war and the people aren't happy. They've been waiting for the latest version of Windows (the one that will actually do what everyone thought Windows 95 would do two centuries ago) for 13 years. By the time it comes out their P39 processor will need upgrading and they'll need to invest in another 1024MB of RAM. Windows 2121 is now a bit of a joke.

Worse, the United Nations has degenerated into an evil, repressive regime that is slowly squeezing the life out of what is left of the planet (hey, at least it's doing something!). A handful of independent states has had enough and want out. These rebels have secretly discovered activity on a far-off planet called Persephone,a mere 68 light years away, and their recent intelligence reports indicate that it could be host to an advanced civilisation. With nothing to lose and everything to gain they send out an interstellar posse to contact the planet in the hope that they will be able to supply vital technology that will help them defeat the UN. When they arrive at the planet their convoy is ambushed by the UN, who seems to have got there first. You awake to find that you are completely lost and all alone aboard a crippled ship. Bummer! Looks like it's going to be one of those days in space again.

So what's up Pussy Cat?

Well, a quick butchers at the screenshots (or a swift gander at the demo on this month's CD) should convince you that if there was an award for best looking thing on a CD, this would be a prime candidate. The SVGA graphics and rendered stuff is nothing short of gorgeous (*Myst* was never this nice), while Legend has gone to great pains to integrate the FMV footage as seamlessly as possible. The game 'stars' Michael Dorn (Mr Worf from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) in the lead role and while it is being hailed as a next generation interactive epic, team spokesperson Mike Verdu maintains that *Mission Critical* will not be yet another CD-ROMbo full of fancy graphics and window dressing: "We're particularly proud of the story in that it tries to answer big philosophical questions while also being entertaining. If bio-mechanical machines were ever to climb higher up the evolutionary scale than humans, would we try to stop them or peacefully co-exist?"

That's all very well, but just because a game is a bit 'deep' and features recognisable actors and a plot doesn't mean people will play it. So far very little has been made of the gameplay aspect, and nobody wants to waste 50 quid on a click-and-watch 'interactive movie' that occasionally asks you to tap the spacebar. Will *Mission Critical* be more 'interactive' than 'movie'?

Mike remains unfazed by this sudden outburst of scepticism. "It's true, there are a lot of people trying to design games and a lot of people trying to make it in Hollywood. We're from the latter group, so while there's a definite movie-like atmosphere to the surroundings, there's also enough gameplay in there to keep you happy. This is our most technologically advanced product ever." Crikey! Z

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NOVA LOGIC

*additional games required for more than two players.

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Nothing has given the video game industry quite as much a kick up the backside as the Sony PlayStation. After years of being perceived as geeky, we're now finding that instead games are considered cool. But why? John Davison looks at the reason behind this change of image.

PlayStation games on the PC

Anything you can do

We can do

hetter

(Top row, left to right) *Actua Soccer, Fatal Racing* and *FX Fighters.* – all are potential PlayStation beaters.

(Below) *Wipeout.*

SEPTEMBER 29 WAS THE DAY THAT Sony Computer Entertainment unleashed the PlayStation – a little grey box costing £299 and possibly the most significant thing to happen to the videogame market in a very long time. Not only is it one of the most powerful pieces of consumer electronics available today, it's also responsible for giving the entire industry a much-needed kick up the arse. Video games are being dragged kicking and screaming out of the sad, spotty geek bedrooms and thrust forcibly into mainstream media, and even into the back rooms of trendy London nightclubs. What exactly is going on, and what the hell has this really got to do with PC games?

Come out and play

The PC is currently going through some truly dramatic changes. There is a trend developing to haul it out of offices, off desktops and into a more consumer electronics role in the home where it sits around controlling everything. Windows 95 is the first step towards this, and the hardware manufacturers are soon going to follow by introducing 'trendy' (ie probably black) system units designed by – who knows? – Jean Paul Gaultier perhaps (actually, that thought has potential: a PC with huge spirally pointy breasts, hmm...).

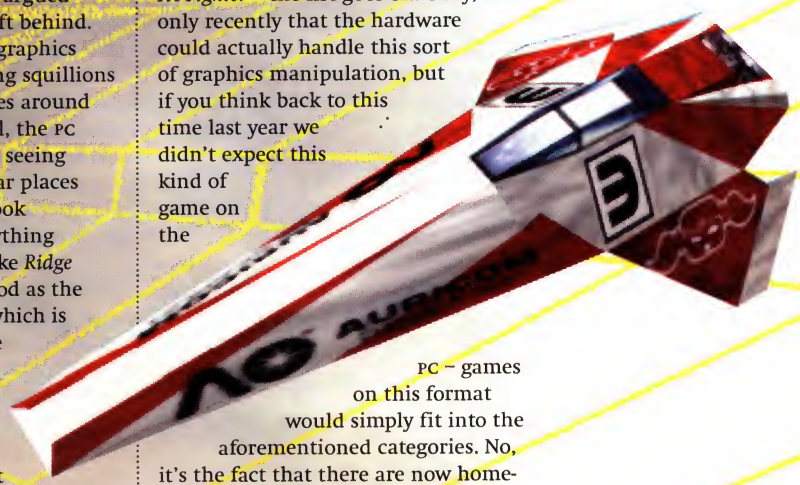
We also have to realise that for the first time ever, the PC is no longer at the very top of the heap as far as technology is concerned. While it's more than capable of doing all sorts of very flash stuff, the PlayStation is more than its match on the graphics technology front.

As the machine continues to appear just about everywhere there is definitely a change in perception among the games playing public. Having ruled the roost for so long, it could be argued that the PC is about to get left behind. The PlayStation has custom graphics hardware capable of throwing squillions of true-colour polygon images around at breakneck speed and, well, the PC hasn't. All of a sudden we're seeing games showing up in familiar places like HMV Level One which look significantly better than anything we've seen before – games like *Ridge Racer,* which looks just as good as the arcade machine, or *Tekken,* which is possibly the most impressive beat 'em up game ever. Scary, isn't it?

The thing is though, this is good news for the PC, because we've found that rather than pushing it back, there are some substantial changes taking place.

Symbiosis: PlayStation needs PC and PC needs PlayStation

If you've been paying attention over the past few months, you'll have noticed that the main thrust of PC games has gone through a startling change. Apart from *Doom,* we tended not to see an enormous number of action games on the PC. There was an abundance of simulations, strategy and adventure titles – plus extremely crap sprite-based platform games – but high-speed action games were quite a rarity. We certainly didn't see 3D polygon generated projects with ludicrous levels of texture-mapping. Just look at the games that have arrived in the past few months – *Screamer, Fatal Racing, Actua Soccer, FX Fighter* – the list goes on. Okay, it's only recently that the hardware could actually handle this sort of graphics manipulation, but if you think back to this time last year we didn't expect this kind of game on the PC – games on this format would simply fit into the aforementioned categories. No, it's the fact that there are now home-based machines which are providing this type of game that we are now seeing developers pushing the graphics capabilities of the PC in a way which has never been done before.



Working our way through the latest batch of games, we've noticed a change in the way that PC games developers are working. Because the PlayStation is more than capable of doing anything the PC can, the vast majority of teams are working on concurrent projects on both systems. A game will often be started as a PC project and then, when the basic structure is done, it will be ported to the PlayStation development system (which incidentally runs on a PC), and worked on exclusively. In doing this, the team can take advantage of the custom polygon and sprite manipulation hardware on the PlayStation and finish the project very quickly. On completion the team can then turn its attention back to the PC version and work on producing the game faithfully using the brute force number crunching power of the Pentium processor. This is a bonus in some ways – having learned from any problems encountered during the PlayStation development process, the team can then optimise and customise the PC code to try and make it as close as possible on both systems.

Beyond this concurrent development approach to games (which is going to become more and more the case in the next few years), we are also seeing conversions of games to the PC which certainly wouldn't have seen the light of day until a few months ago.

« If you've been watching the games press, or even the mainstream press over the past few months, you will have seen some truly stunning looking games on the PlayStation. Virtually all of them make use of the machine's incredible polygon handling abilities, and whether or not the gameplay is any good, they all look fantastic. But what you may not know is that the vast majority of these games are now being ported to the PC, and in most cases it's increasingly apparent that the PC is more than capable of keeping up.

Ridge Racer

Software House: TBC

One of the worst-kept secrets in the PC market at the moment is the fact that *Ridge Racer* has been developed for the PC and is pretty much finished. How do we know about this? Well, we've seen it – and it looks absolutely unbelievable. The only problem is that no one will actually own up to being responsible for publishing it; it's all very hush-hush and secret. Namco, who owns the license for the game, is playing things very close to its chest – so close in fact that no screenshots will be made public for another few months.

What we've learned so far though is that the team that has developed the game are the same guys who have converted *Wipeout* to the PC. Basically, the same 3D engine has been used to transfer everything across, and from what we saw it is utterly incredible. It blows absolutely all other texture-mapped polygon racing games on the PC out of the water – including *Screamer*.

As far as we were able to make out, the only differences between the PlayStation and PC versions are that the PC runs in a slightly lower resolution (320x200 VGA), and only 256 colours as opposed to 16-bit colour. All of the texture maps are present though, and we were informed that because of the nature of the license agreement, no speed saving detail adjustments are permitted in the PC version – which means you won't be able to turn off the sky or the road detail to run the game on a slow machine. However, the upshot of this is that the team is optimising the arse off the thing to ensure that it runs at a staggering frame-rate with all of the detail of the original game.

We were also reliably informed that the final version of *Ridge Racer* will feature a networking option – and that's something which certainly isn't present in the PlayStation version.

Destruction Derby

Software House: Sony Interactive

Yet another of the showcase PlayStation games is transferred virtually perfectly to the PC. Certainly looking better than *Ridge Racer* and playing on everyone's desire to smash up cars and drive around racing tracks the wrong way, this is an excellent simulation of stock car racing. The texture-mapped polygon graphics are nothing short of stunning and the only differences between the two are that the PC version features 256-colour graphics rather than 16-bit colour, and on the PC there's the option to play a 16-player network game should the inclination take you.

Assault Rigs

Software House: Sony Interactive

A rather nifty twist on the old-fashioned tank battle games (you surely must remember the ones on the VCS where you just trundled around a map trying to kill each other?). This is a fully 3D environment with relatively simplistic graphics (polygons of course) and the gameplay involves trying to blow up the other tanks in the playing area. The PlayStation version relies very heavily on the single player aspects of the gameplay, while the PC version is geared very much towards a multi-player network or modem game.

Parasite

Software House: Sony Interactive

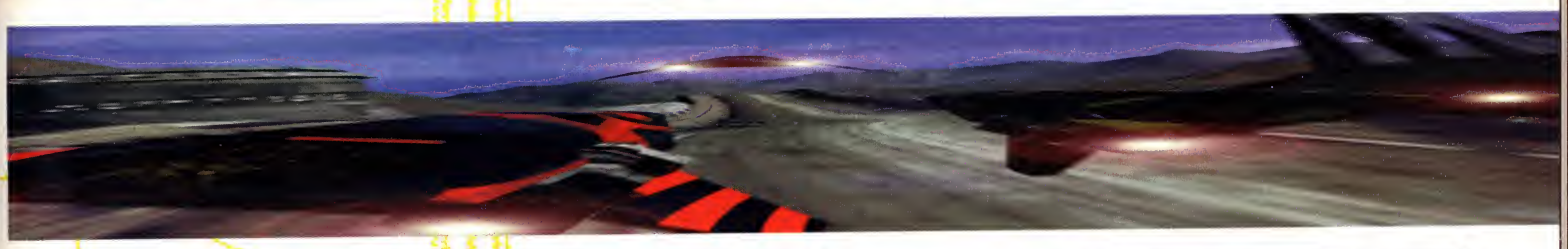
A rather spiffing looking platform game which also has a really smart storyline. You play the part of a bloke called Jack who accidentally swallows a miniature alien spacecraft when he drains his pint of lager in the local pub. The ensuing adventure tells the tale of how this parasite affects his life and, of course, gets him into all sorts of trouble.

The game has plenty to recommend it – digitised sprites, some very lovely looking 3DS-generated backdrops and lots of speech and nice music. All in all it's an enjoyable twist on an old theme.

Krazy Ivan

Software House: Sony Interactive

We covered this baby previously when we went along to see the filming of the cut scenes a couple of months ago. As you probably know, this is a very action-oriented slant on the *Mech*-style battling robots games. It's significantly more arcade-like than *MechWarrior 2* (which stressed the simulation element), and features lots of big stomping robots, an enormous amount of firepower and plenty of stupendous huge explosions. Check out our Blueprint in issue 30 to find out more details.



City of the Lost Children

Software House: Sony Interactive

City of the Lost Children is a bit different. It's an absolutely gorgeous looking rendered adventure game that features a storyline by Marc Caro, the co-author of *Delicatessen*. The story deals with a man who is growing old prematurely due to the fact that he can't dream – and as a result he steals the dreams of children. The whole thing sounds decidedly spooky and exactly the sort of storyline you'd expect a graphic novel author like Neil Gaiman to come up with.

The game itself has been designed as one of the first proper adventures for the PlayStation, and as a result *City of the Lost Children* has proven to be a very effective PC conversion possibility.

Wipeout

Software House: Sony Interactive

You must have seen all of the hype about this one – it's been on the cover of a multitude of magazines in the past few months – but until now, no one has pointed out that it's not a PlayStation-only release. Basically this is a futuristic racing game similar in style to Bullfrog's *Hi-Octane*, where you fly hover ships around various tracks throughout the galaxy. Graphically it is truly awesome and where the PC version scores over the PlayStation is in the multi-player department. On Sony's beast you can play linked-up using a special cable, but the PC version offers modem, serial and network linking options. One of the most promising PC action games around the Christmas period, it plays wonderfully and is texture-mapped polygon-tastic.

Tekken

Software House: TBC

One of the finest beat 'em ups ever produced. Forget *FX Fighter*, forget *Virtua Fighter* – this is the dog's bollocks. As with *Ridge Racer* though, it's officially unconfirmed that anyone is even thinking about converting *Tekken* to the PC; however, we have it on very good authority that it's extremely likely that we'll see it at some point next year. This one is so secret that we really shouldn't tell you anything about it – in fact, if we found out you'd ever heard it was actually going to come out, we'd probably have no other option but to track you down and shoot you.

G-Police

Software House: Sony Interactive

This is a distinctly smart looking 3D blast 'em up thing in which you find yourself screaming around a city environment that seems to be generated by a very *Magic Carpet*-esque graphics engine. The story has you chasing after your sister, who has been kidnapped or something. The plot seems largely irrelevant though, as it's basically *Magic Carpet* meets *Blade Runner*, with some gorgeous, gorgeous visuals.

Warhawk

Software House: Sony Interactive

A truly original 3D combat game which was a surprise highlight on Sony's PlayStation stand at the E3 show which took place in LA this May. Taking all of the best bits from 3D combat simulator and throwing them into an arcade game environment, this is an awesome blast 'em up game that has you cruising around in a futuristic fighter that looks uncannily like the drop-ship from *Aliens*. The graphics are simply astounding throughout and the gameplay is that good old-fashioned stuff – fun – with lots of shooting. From what we've looked at so far, the PC and PlayStation versions look virtually identical.

Vive La Difference

Just to make you feel a bit better, we've had a look around at a lot of other PlayStation games in development to judge what they're like. Despite the apparent flashiness of the PlayStation though, there are a lot of games being converted from the PC which look either exactly the same, or in some cases worse, on the Sony unit.

Magic Carpet
Theme Park
Doom
Lemmings 3D
Discworld
Novastorm
Myst
Mortal Kombat 3
Wing Commander 3

»

« Aside from the fact that the PC is doing more than a good job of keeping up with the current trend, there are a lot of positive things happening in the games development field at the present moment. For a start, the PlayStation and PC markets will continue to spur each other on – PlayStation projects will push the technical abilities of the PC and vice versa. The basic result of this will be that games will just get better and better. The advent of next generation consoles has meant that we've seen a significant jump in the visual quality of PC games in the past six months and it's certain that this trend will continue.

For the time being anyway, the two markets are pretty much neck-and-neck in terms of what each machine is capable of. As ever though, the PC is on the brink of taking yet another huge step in terms of power. As you know, the Pentium has already established itself as the standard processor and this has provided developers with far more number crunching power. Just around the corner we have P6, with its pre-emptive processing and true 64-bit addressing, and the soon-to-be-industry-standard GLINT 3D system which is starting to appear as you read this. We've gone into this before, but GLINT is the first example of custom hardware for the PC and effectively allows a fairly average PC (DX2) to do anything that the PlayStation can with polygon-based visuals. Who knows, in a year's time the whole thing will happen all over again and we'll be talking about another console that is challenging the PC for graphical supremacy.

As it stands, the PC will continue as the driving force behind the computer games market and developers will carry on pushing it so that it will remain more than a match for any new young upstarts that may happen to rear their heads. Nice try Sony. **Z**

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Looking Back

Command & Conquer
Software House: Virgin
Reviewed: Issue 28

After a long wait it's out at last, and blow me if it isn't the most amazingly playable game ever. Yes, I know we reviewed it several millennia ago, but now we've seen the final, final, final out in the shops version and it is in serious danger of stopping all work in the office. Prepare to upset loved ones and also to lose anything that even mildly resembles a life. The team has already made a pact that if any of our loved ones pack their bags and leave because of this game, we'll all look after each other.

Without a doubt this is one of the best games of the year, buy it – even if you don't like strategy games. It's got the best sound and the most atmosphere of just about any game, and it's more addictive than just about any addictive thing you'd care to think of.

Championship Manager 2
Software House: Domark
Reviewed: Issue 31

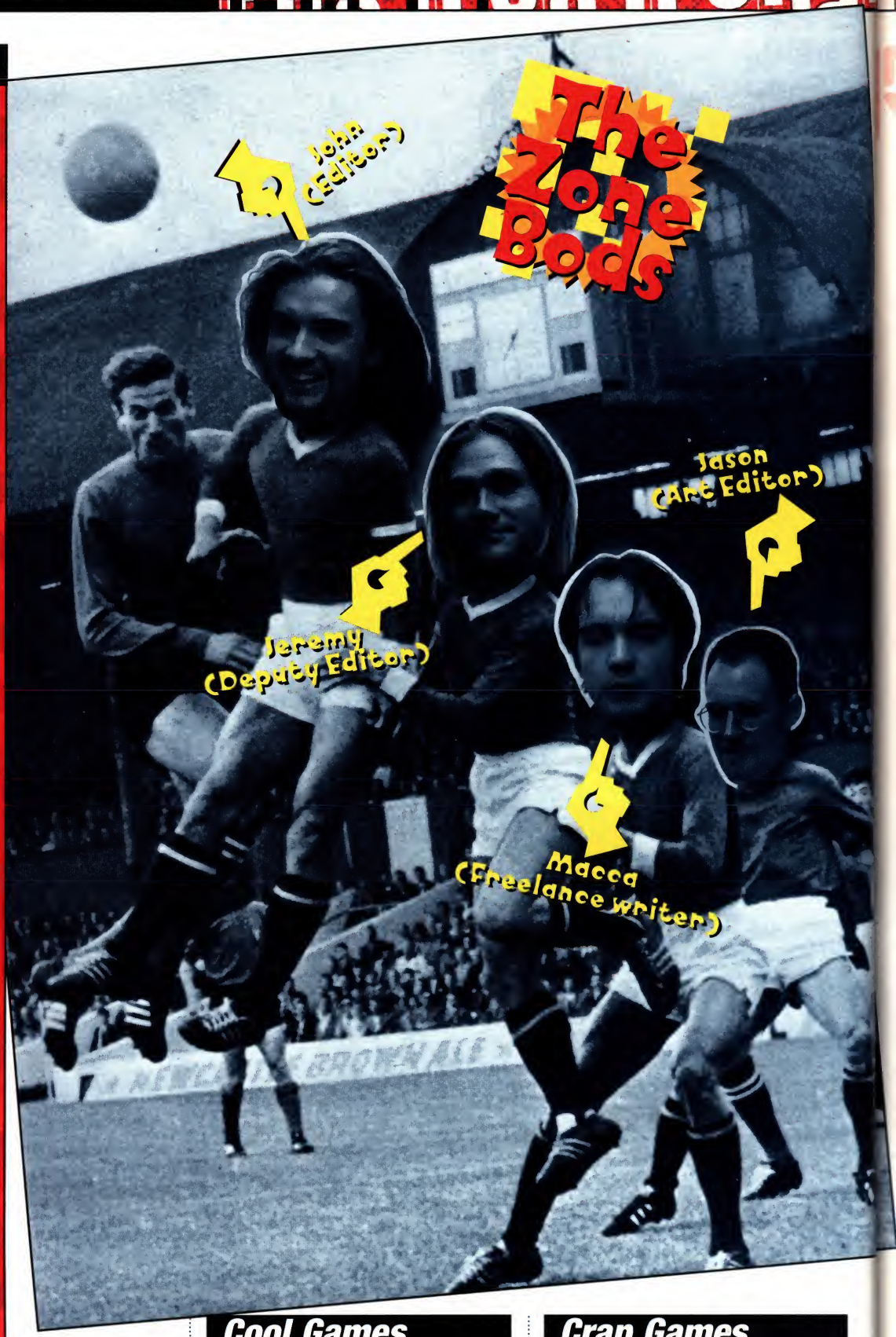
This baby definitely improves with age. And of course we now love it even more because Domark has been extra lovely and written *PC Zone* in very large letters on the front of the box. Thanks lads. Make no mistake, this is the best football management game ever, and if Jeremy plays it any more when he should be getting his head down and writing the news, I will insist that he helps the Trueplayer™ do a *Cyberbykes* guide.

The Need For Speed
Software House: Electronic Arts
Reviewed: Issue 31

The more you play this one, the more you realise just how bloody good it is. We didn't take to this game at all when we first played it. The steering seemed a bit weird and difficult to get used to, but if you play it for a while, you're sure to get hooked. It's very different from the more action oriented driving games that are appearing such as *Fatal Racing* (see this month's review) and it's the only game I've ever seen that lets you handbrake-turn a Testarossa, and that has to be good. It's one of the best presented games around at the moment and it has the fastest SVGA road routine of any racing game we've played.

Lemmings 3D
Software House: Psygnosis
Reviewed: Issue 31

Now, we only gave this one 71% when we reviewed it last month, and while this score still stands, it has to be said that the more you play it, the better it gets. The 3D system is an absolute pig to get used to – it's taken us over a month – but in the end it ain't bad. OK, it's still Lemmings – but it does look very nice.



Original photograph is © 1969 World Distributors Ltd and Kenneth Wolstenholme. Taken from the Official 1970 World Cup Preview Book. Available from all good jumble sales.

Cool Games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff…

- **Championship Manager 2**
- **Command & Conquer**
- **FX Fighter**
- **Magic Carpet 2**
- **TFX2 – EF2000**
- **The Need For Speed**

Crap Games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying, "please steal me," and you still can't get rid of the bloody things…

- **Action Soccer**
- **Battle Beast**
- **Blown Away**
- **Cyberbykes**
- **Dungeon Master 2**
- **The Last Dynasty**

Reviews Section

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ *CLASSIC*
Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc., etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes *oozing* playability.

80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70–79
A good idea that's been reasonably well implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying "do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

60–69
Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50–59
Averagely average Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40–49
A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20–39
Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below *PANTS*
Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the *PC Zone* big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.

Reviews Index

Al Unser Jr Racing	91
Ascendancy	68
Battle Beast	82
Burn:Cycle	85
Crime Patrol	76
Darker	75
Fatal Racing	64
Gamegun	76
Magic Carpet 2	60
NHL Hockey 96	78
PGA Tour 96	80
Pitfall	89
Primal Rage	71

(Below) The new version of *Magic Carpet* takes the bloody 'orrible monstie factor right up to ten – just take a look at the leviathan's teeth!

The Palme D'Or. The Oscars. The Emmys. The Grammies. Miss World. Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* won every award in the world last year – but is anybody still playing it? David McCandless investigates the sequel.

YES, YES, WE'RE ALL WELL AWARE that *Magic Carpet* won every award ever. The journalists (especially French ones) were falling like ninepins, spooging all over themselves, and generally clap-clap-clapping those jolly old Bullfrog boys. And the game was, indeed, bloody impressive. It was an unbelievable real-time landscape-o-rama™, undulating water, castles and edifices morphing out of the texture-mapped, light-shaded ground. An interesting setting, namely an Arabic/Persian locale (baggy trousered populace, scimitars etc), some cool spells including earthquake, meteor and volcano, and the usual Bullfrog mish-mash of mana, castles, little people, and 'thinky bits'. It was the first action game to have a SVGA option and it even had a stereogram mode ("Do you see an elephant? I see a bottle of Bacardi. Is that Jenny Agutter?" said the spectators). It looked great on paper, even better in the flesh, played well, stunned hundreds. All in all, it managed to make *Doom* look like a badly programmed batch file (well, maybe). But then, it just sort of disappeared.

That was because it didn't really grab. There just wasn't enough variation of scenery. The gameplay was a little too much of a mix between the cerebral and the shooty. It was hard to tell exactly what to do next; the opposing wizards were too fast and clever and the interface was a little tricky to operate in the heat of battle. And there were too many spells to manage. The Americans didn't like it much either, despite its *Doom*-beating, eight-player network option. However, now *Magic Carpet II: Netherworlds* has been released to correct those faults and hopefully drag us gameplayers screaming and kicking away from *Doom*. Yeah, like, as if... right?

Woven floor covering with supernatural tendencies

For the non-French journalists among us, *Magic Carpet* places you in the curly shoes of an Arabian wizard's apprentice, astride an aerodynamic paranormal rug. Fated to save the world before *Oprah* starts, you have to trek through 30-odd levels, restoring the 'mana balance' of the world. Mana is contained in the wonderful menagerie of monsters who rove the misty islets, mountainous outcrops, and wide open seas of the magic lands. Once pounded with an appropriate amount of fireballs, the monsters explode into mana balls which have to be tagged as yours with a possession spell. Mana is the foundation of your castle which you create from a single turret at the beginning of the game. Balloons are sent out to collect and deliver possessed mana balls back to your keep. The more mana you have, the bigger your castle. The bigger your castle, the larger your mana reserves, and the more power you have for the spells you've collected. The more powerful spells you collect, the more monsties you can kill. And so on and so forth...

Paranormal rug

Things are slightly complicated by the existence of other wizards who are intent on doing the same thing as you. As the castles grow bigger and the

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Hard Disk Space: 5Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All (Q-Sound on AWE32 and Gravis)
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Magic Carpet II

(Above) Well, it's quite clearly a mouth of some sort, isn't it? And a bloody big one at that.

(Left) The monsties just get bigger and bigger. Not content with lobbing lots of little nasties at you, it lobs in a dirty great big multi-headed dragon thing.

monsters scarcer, the quest for mana becomes an all out war as you and the rest of the mages tussle over stray balls, attack each others' balloons, attempt to destroy rival castles, and launch ever more powerful spells at all and sundry. If you play it safe and sneak around the landscape, you can usually avoid trouble – but then you get no mana. If you attack another player's balloon, he'll come and eke revenge on you. Bug him a bit more and he'll go off and start blatting your castle. And once your castle's weakened, the other players wade in with their fireballs, hoping to rid themselves of a competitor. So you can find yourself fending off six wizards simultaneously. And then you die.

The matter is further complicated by the amorality of the monsters, who just wander around picking on anything that moves. Perhaps not much of a hassle if it's a giant bee or a skeleton or something, but seriously threatening if you come up against a dragon, or a leviathan, or extremely large demon.

You want more complications? Okay. On each level there's usually a band of human settlers, whose tents or houses you can possess to 'borrow' their mana. But if you accidentally fry a couple of innocents or, you know, make a volcano appear in their town square, *they turn against you* and attack your castle.

Just as an added complexity bonus, each level is fraught with hotspots which trigger events, which of course are usually nasty. One minute you could be flying gleefully to a store of mana, and then next a massive whirlwind might pop up out of nowhere and scrunch you into a little pellet. Or you might see a clutch of huge mana balls in an idyllic looking oasis in the middle of the desert. Possess one of them though and a hundred zombie warlords materialise out of the haze and attack you en masse. Nasty.

Sorcerous shag

Magic Carpet has a mouse/keyboard control system which allows you – luckily – to deal with these hazards and perform some nifty airborne stunts which would make your favourite flight-sim chum black out and puke in his helmet (the one he wears when he plays *Apache* in the sad little mock cockpit he's installed in his lounge). For a start, you never crash into the landscape. Your magic rug cleverly hugs the terrain, no matter how high or low it goes, leaving you free to strafe left and right, and acceleration/slowdown with the cursors. The mouse is used to turn and to dip if required, and a spell can be assigned to each mouse button, giving you simultaneous offensive and defensive capabilities. All this means you can rake the landscape with fireballs, whip into a canyon for cover, tear out, top a mountain, and zoom down at mach three to re-engage your target. All this freedom of movement gives you time to be not only devastating skillful, but also rather creative with your spell-casting.

Spells are either found around the landscape or among the charred remains of your competitors. You start with a simple fireball/possession combo, and move up slowly through the 25 ranks, which fall into three main categories: Defensive, Offensive, and Down Right Silly. On the defensive side, there's invisible, shield, teleport, and Summon Army, which creates a little flotilla of monsties to do your bidding. Offensives are the typically magic fare – lightning bolts, fireballs, meteors, whirlwinds, and mines. In the Down Right Silly category, however, things get interesting. There's a whole vista of spells for destroying and redesigning the landscape, from Crater (which creates a mere pockmark) to Earthquake (which splits a huge ravine into the land), Volcano to Gravity Well (which sucks all nearby organic beings to Hell). To further increase your armoury, each spell has three power levels, which you can access by gaining experience with the spell. The fireball, for instance, starts off bog standard, evolves into a rapid fireball, and then finally into a devastating fire storm.

Magic matting

Magic Carpet II seems to have addressed both the long and shortcomings of its predecessor. The story driven plot makes much more sense than the aimless realm-wandering of the original (even though it uses annoying RPG names like C'Lannesh, Vissuluth and Zyggog). The change of settings to day and night, overground and underground works well, and the gameplay is much more staged and has less of the whaddya-do-next about it. The opposing wizards, too, seemed to be toned down a bit. »

(Left) Some examples of the new graphical style of *Carpet II*. The most notable of which is the addition of scary night-time bits.

Monsters from Hell

Bees: Annoying, fast, small and hard to hit. They travel in swarms and are best shot from afar.

Cymmerians: These things are so annoying. They flap really slowly over the landscape, launching the odd fireball. Once dead however, you have to watch out because they release a group of tiny, fast moving bugs which rattle across the map in search of your castle which they then gnaw at big time. If one gets through your defences it's annoying. If ten get through, you're finished.

Devils: Giggling like loons, these fireball-firing imps bounce up and down across land and water. They're quite hard to hit but incredibly pleasurable to destroy.

Dragons: These lovelies loop mindlessly over the landscape, they can dodge fireballs, and are dangerous in packs.

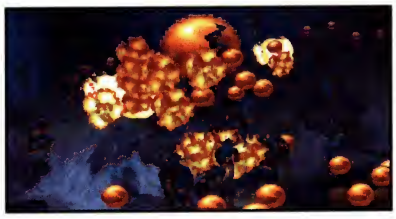
Leviathans: These gruesome underwater behemoths only surface to attack. Although it's actually quite easy to out-run them, you just never know when they'll pop up next.

Manticore: Irritating dog-like things which will chase you in packs, at the same time launching green 'stun blobs' which slow you down enough for them to bite you.

Sentinels: Slow but deadly if they see you, they fire three volleys of high powered fireballs.

Best solution: use rebound.

Spiders: Euch, these are enough to make you shudder. The horrible little creepy-crawlies scuttle itchily across rocks and hide in crevices waiting to attack you with poisonous webs.



Although they move as fast and are as clever as their predecessors, they no longer spend hours frustratingly attacking your balloons or ganging up (as often) on your castle. And they seem to die much easier. The new monsters are good, although the new hulking non-polygon leviathan is a bit crap, and the sound, from the echoey plink of water in the underground caverns to the ricocheting bullet fx of the rebound spell, is excellent and gives the game a very moody feel. And, joy upon joys, the 3D studio-rendered intro isn't as long, boring or gratuitous as the last one (where wizard apprentice battles impressive dragon and takes about 17 minutes, 400 camera angles, eight 'lens effects', five posh spinning things and 183MB of CD space to do so).

On the physical side, the engine seems slightly enhanced. *Magic Carpet II* runs much faster on a P90 than the first game and Bullfrog has dropped the flashier graphical options (motion blur, anti-aliasing and stereogram). SVGA doesn't seem to run much faster, even with the sky, shadows and reflections turned off, but it's still the most advanced and best looking 3D engine around. Not even *Terminal Velocity* could take that accolade away.

If I had to make one gripe about *Magic Carpet II*, it would be that it's now *too* easy. I didn't have to replay a level once. The spells are a bit too powerful and too numerous too quickly. Never was my castle completely destroyed. The other wizards all fell after a bit of 'gentle' prodding. Some of the monsters gave me a bit of gip, especially ones which appeared unexpectedly, but I was never seriously threatened. They're not that much cleverer than *Doom's*, and it's fairly easy to lead them around the landscape, circling and fireballing them into oblivion. Even the dreaded Wyvern, which appeared around level 17 of the 30-odd missions, didn't give me much pause – it soon fell to a few well-placed volcano spells. It seems in erasing all the technicalities of the first game and all the bits the Americans didn't understand (ie almost everything) Bullfrog has made *Magic Carpet II* a little too much of a breeze for hardened gameplayers and reflex masters.

Abject lack of serial, modem, or parallel play doesn't help. Neither does the use of the less prolific and substantially less fast NETBIOS over IPX network play. And, let's face it, any game featuring a realm called Zyggogg has got to be joking.

Watch out Macca, you'll give yourself Carpet burns

Aside from all that, *Magic Carpet II* had me gripped. Glued. Attached. Airfixed. Nailed. Rivetted. Bolted. Tied. Stuck. Transfixed. Yeah, it has faults. But hey – who doesn't? Jesus lost his temper once, right? The litmus test for cool games is not based on graphics, fancy engines, spinning rotatey sprites, or even fun value. Graphics pale, engines wear off, rotatey sprites annoy, and even fun fades away – just think of your average orgasm. *(Speak for yourself – Ed)*. There's only one currency here, and that's addiction. That stomachy, got-to-have-one-more-go-god-damnit compulsion to play, a game so addictive it keeps you up so late playing it that you wake up with puffy little pig eyes and a bushy '1970s' haircut. *Magic Carpet II*'s got it. Z

(Below) More scary new bits. *Magic Carpet* meets *Doom* in the underground scenes.

Score

92

Sexy, addictive fun with more juice than the average orgasm (allegedly).

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

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PC CDROM

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PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Fatal Racing

Don't let Duncan MacDonald loose on the road – we've seen him in action with *Fatal Racing*. Apt title really...

Before raving about Fatal Racing, I just want to have a bit of a beef about something. And it's this: bloody Pentiums inducing lazy programming. *Fatal Racing* you see, (and it's not the only offender), runs like a three-legged dog on any platform lower than a P60. And the majority of folk haven't got a P-anything yet, so they have to drop off the detail levels... no textures, no rotatey-bitmaps, no distant backgrounds, nothing. But that's not really the problem. The problem is that even at this mega low res toggle, proceedings still chug along rather lamely (why?) – and possibly worse even than this is that everything looks bloody awful. Why should this be? After all, you know the brilliant *F1GP*? And how it doesn't have any rotatey-bitmaps or anything? But still manages to look great and run at a zillion miles per second? Even on a 386? Exactly. Good programming, utilising code and stuff to the nth degree rather than leaning on unwelcome hardware shortcuts. Whinge, whinge, whinge.

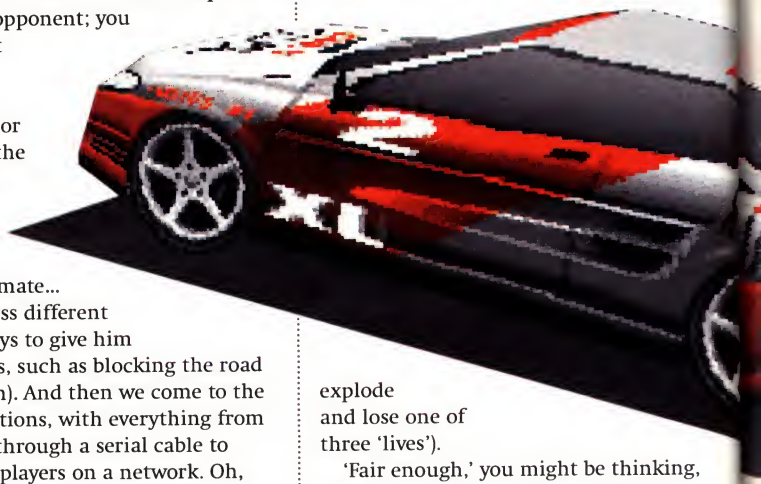
But back to the review. Okay, I think we've sorted out the fact that it's a case of 'Beware Ye With Shite Systems', so if you're a 486-er you can just sob quietly to yourself. The rest of you, I'll assume, are Pentium dudes and chicks.

Fatal Racing, to do a sort of boring point by point listing, has 16 tracks. There are eight cars to choose from, all with different pros and cons (good acceleration but poor top speed, high top speed but crap brakes, and so on). There are several race modes: time trials; head-to-head with one computer controlled opponent; you versus eight computer controlled opponents; or you versus the full 16 (and in this mode you've got a team mate... you can press different function keys to give him instructions, such as blocking the road and so forth). And then we come to the network options, with everything from two-player through a serial cable to eight or 16 players on a network. Oh, and there's also a horizontal split screen mode.

So there's your basics.

DISENGAGE BRAIN

Now onto the gameplay, which is fab. I'd better mention, however, that the cars don't handle particularly realistically – *The Need For Speed* this ain't. What it is, though, is a bloody good laugh. Disengage brain and enjoy. *Fatal Racing* is a full contact sport, and the idea is to smash as many cars off the road as you can on your way to the finish line... and the AI on the computer controlled cars is pretty good, meaning they're more than capable of doling it out as well as receiving. What this adds up to is that you're going to find yourself pulling into the pits at least a couple of times each race, because the damage you incur tots up to the point where your engine catches fire (at best this reduces visibility, at worst you'll explode and lose one of three 'lives').



'Fair enough,' you might be thinking, 'but this is pretty standard stuff with some Pentium graphics. Where's the meat?' And I'll tell you where the 'meat' is – it's in the 16 aforementioned tracks. Tracks that are of the ilk of, say, *Hard Driving*, or *Stunt Car Racer*. Loops and corkscrews. Crevasses in the middle of the road. Ramps that send you spinning into the air to perform a 360 degree roll before landing back on your wheels (or a 540 degree roll before landing on your roof if you get it wrong). That sort of thing, but all the time you're also hacking it for a good finishing position while simultaneously slamming the

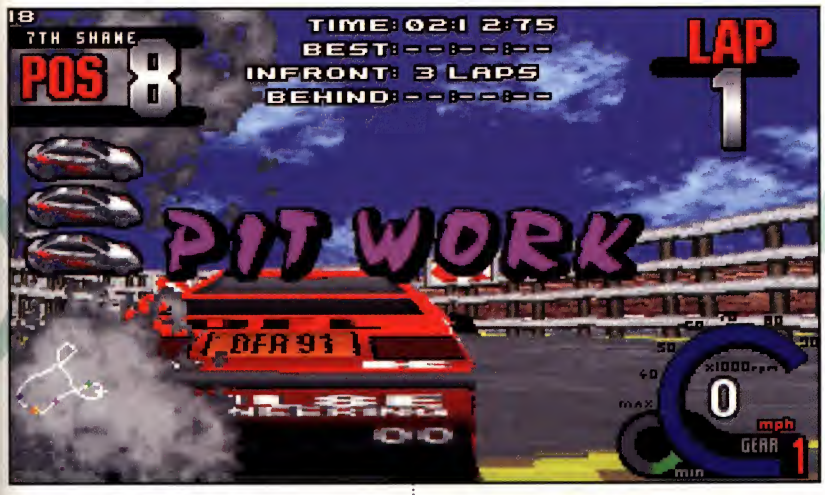
(Below) Er... I thought this was supposed to be a car.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Hard Disk Space: 26Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick

(Right) The uppy-downy, twisty-turny effects are pretty fab.

(Below) Our gallant driver is forced to jump out of his car and go and work in a mine.



sides and backs of your adversaries. You don't get much time to think, basically. I got through a whole packet of fags while playing *Fatal Racing* one evening, and didn't smoke any of them. (I'd light one up, only to leave it burning away, forgotten, in the ashtray. Repeat cycle 20 times.)

So at the end of the day, it's got to be full marks to the track designers, who have done an excellent job.

And also top marks to the sound effects folk, because what with the engine sounds, the squealing tyres, and the race 'commentator', a sense of urgency is sustained at all times. (Yeah okay, you have to be there.)

But back very briefly to the graphics. I know I whinged at length earlier, but here's a final wheeze, as it were. Okay. They look fab, but they're Pentium graphics and so they should look fab. However, they don't actually move very quickly. The fluidity's hunky dory, but when you glance at your speedo it'll very often read, say, 210mph. Bollocks. The maximum speed 'feels' more like 90mph. Still, this doesn't really matter. Either ignore the speedo, or pretend that you're continental and covering kilometres rather than miles.

Oh, there's one other thing: the *Fatal Racing* manual says: "We suggest you use the SVGA mode only on a Pentium". I suggest you only use the SVGA mode on a Cray Supercomputer. Yup, it's Slide Show time again, folks.

IT'S GOOD, BUT...

So, it's now time to sum up. Right, as mentioned, the cars don't handle in a breathtakingly realistic fashion... but take it from me (a bit of a propellor head when it comes to these things) – it doesn't matter. You'll happily live with it. And the sense of speed (or rather lack of it) soon gets forgotten, amidst all the action. That means the two main drawbacks are getting on for irrelevant. One thing that isn't irrelevant, however, is that *Fatal Racing* is rather unlucky in that it shares roughly the same release date as a bevvy of other excellent driving games: *Screamer, F1GP2*, and a few other. I'm taking this into account in the score, which may seem mean, but it's not really. Oh, all right then, it is mean. But it's a jungle out there. Z

Score

88

***Ridge Racer* meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a pentium, of course**

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** November
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 01142 753423

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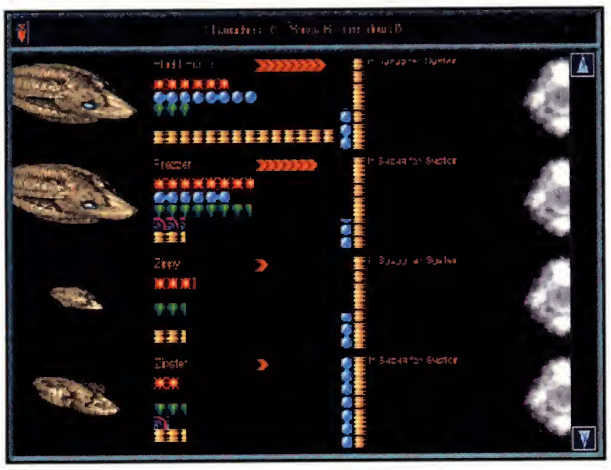
What does it take to be a leader of men? To colonise a galaxy? To rule the universe? "Who wants a coffee?" asked Paul Presley, fulfilling his job description. Just the chap...



Ascendancy

PC ZONE CLASSIC

(Top) As the game progresses, you'll no doubt be building a large fleet of ships. Each race has their own designs and you can even give them their own silly names.

(Top right) Negotiating with alien races is tricky. Most of them are either sniffily superior or grovellingly creepy. Alliances can prove beneficial at times though.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TOLD YOU'VE made a woman pregnant? (*WHAT?? What kind of way to start a review is that? Do you know how old our average reader is? – Ed.*) Trust me, I know where I'm going with this. (*You'd better – Ed.*) Ahem, back to my question – have you ever been told you've made a woman pregnant? Probably not.

But let me tell you what it's like from the male point of view. You spend all night awake, your brow moulded into a permanent frown of worry, your social life reduced to trips to the local newsagent for cigarettes and disposable lighters and every time the phone rings your heart jumps about three feet. Well, those are exactly the same feelings I've had since I started playing *Ascendancy*. (*I really don't want to know how you were able to make that comparison – Ed.*)

You see it's one of those games that makes you think. No, that's an understatement – a dinner menu makes you think. *Ascendancy* grabs hold of your brain, squeezes, kneads and prods it, throws it against a wall, plays basketball with it, wraps it up with electro-shock ribbon and deposits it back in your head. By now it's so full of thoughts, plans, ideas, strategies and theorems that you'd shame a *Sun* reporter getting a story on the Queen Mother having an affair with Nigel Lawson by breaking into a house in Islington.

Hang on to your seats folks, Presley's gone loco!

Okay, time to settle into a comfortable reviewing pattern and start telling you why I've gone so nuts over what at first glance appears to be little more than yet another space-based strategy game. Remember how when playing games like *Sim City* you'd wish you could take your people from their thriving metropolis onto a higher level of management? Or while playing *Outpost* how you wished you could see and conquer more of the universe? Or while tackling *Rules of Engagement 2* you wished you could try peaceful negotiations with alien races rather than constant warfare? You see where I'm going? *Ascendancy* has managed to take all of the best bits from all the other god/strategy/warfare games out there in the oh-so-crowded marketplace and combine them into one huge amalgamation of gaming joy.

You have to take care of everything in your quest for universal dominance to gain the fabled ascendancy to a higher plane of existence. From choosing the best race to control (each having their own unique talents that, for once in a game like this, determine how you tackle each game, rather than being the

Tech specs

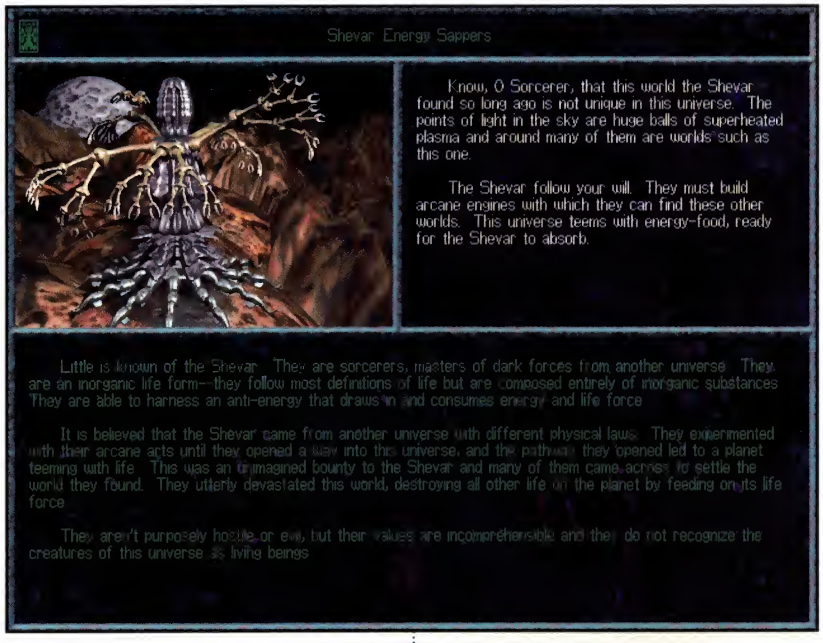
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 15Mb
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major cards
Controls: Mouse or keyboard

(Right) The system screen shows each star and its surrounding planets in more detail. Most of the action takes place from here.

(Far right) Each planet has its own resources and it's up to you to make sure you use them to their best advantage.

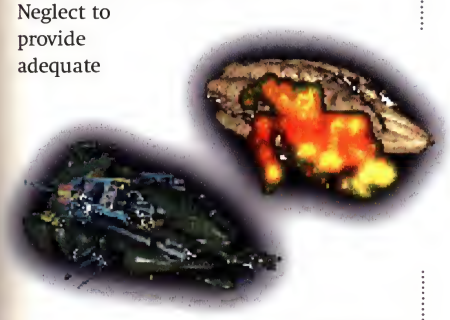
(Left) This is the main screen and shows the entire galaxy. Who's where, what they're doing and which leading newspapers are ignoring them in favour of stories about celebrities' sex lives.

(Right) Each race has its own unique talents and goals (although ultimately everyone's striving for total dominance). My only qualm is that they all look a bit silly.



usual role-playing window dressing), to making sure your planetary resources develop in a prosperous manner, to deciding where to start your colonisation plans.

And it's not as though the different aspects all work individually. For example, the amount of ships you can have is limited by the number of planets you colonise. This means that if you want to start expanding, you have to have well-run planets. None of that 'Stay at home and build a massive fleet' nonsense. The amazing thing is that you can steer a planet's development in a particular direction, suited to your personal needs. Increase the amount of technological research and you'll be able to build ships quicker. Neglect to provide adequate



habitation though and you'll run out of workers. Yin and Yang, Dark and Light, Sonny and Cher – it's all a question of balance.

The wild black yonder

But don't go thinking *Ascendancy* is a glorified *Sim City*. If that's the impression I've given then I might as well change my name to Bobby Davro and make a living from being crap. Planetary management is but a small part of the whole game; once you start building your fleet and venturing outwards into the multiverse everything becomes one hundred and thirty five percent more complicated. Alien races are discovered, negotiations start (which are normally as effective as a UN charter, inevitably leading to war), empires are formed, new technology is researched, cats and dogs live together – total confusion but totally engaging.

It works because, for once, the designers have managed to get every element exactly right. The interface is intelligent and instinctive to use, the challenge is perfectly set, the game grows at the same pace as the player's skill, and it looks nice to boot.

Yes, that age-old problem of strategy games with mediocre graphics finally seems to have been put so far behind us it'll need a passport and flight reservations to catch up. You can't fault the presentation of *Ascendancy*, from the high-quality and wonderfully varied graphics, to the haunting and orchestral music, to the informative and helpful on-screen tutorial. Never has a game managed to make you *want* to keep playing as much as this one does.

Time for a cliché

"It's not without its faults," I hear you cry, mocking me with one of my more commonly used phrases – and you'd be right. Trouble is, the only faults I can find are purely personal ones. Such as: I'd have liked a few little animations on some of the graphics; I'd have liked the musical scores to go on a bit longer and maybe fade into one another with more fluidity; I'd have liked the aliens to be a little more sensible in their appearance and description. But there's simply no mistaking the quality – if there was a multi-player option I'd be transported to Nirvana. As it is, I'm more than happy to be sleeping in its doorway, asking for change from passers-by. Z

(Below) War! And how! The only annoyance about the battles is that you can only give one order at a time. The best bit is that there's an amazing array of weaponry to mess about with.

Footnote

As a side note to the rest of the review, I'd like to add the following. While playing *Ascendancy* a lot of people walked past me here at the mighty *PC Zone* Vegetation and Soilage Renewal Plant and mutter things like, "So, what? It's a bit like *Star Trek* then, with the different aliens and battles and stuff?" (They're not a particularly literate bunch here.) Well no, it's not a bit like *Star Trek*. If you're going to make a comparison to a television series, *Ascendancy* is more like *Babylon 5* with its warring factions, planet colonisations and its diplomatic to-ing and fro-ing. There's no real reason for my having said all that but at least it gave me a chance to promote what is the best science-fiction series on television. Roll on February and series three (apparently in widescreen, no less).

Score

93

What's that flying out of the window? Oh look, it's your social life.

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Primal Rage

Charlie Brooker ponders what killed off the dinosaurs. Well, if they were capable of some of the moves in *Primal Rage*...

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

(Left) Diablo's fiery breath was useful during a scrap, but made it hard for him to make new friends.

WHAT EXACTLY KILLED OFF THE dinosaurs? There's a multitude of theories to choose from: the ice age, a giant comet, reversal of the Earth's magnetic poles, ancient Egyptian UFO pilots... the list is endless. Judging by the evidence on display in *Primal Rage*, however, I think it's pretty safe to assume that their mass extinction was simply the result of a massive bundle that got seriously out of hand.

Yup, that's right. *Primal Rage* is the latest blood-thirsty beat 'em up to make the inevitable transition from arcade to home. Any smacking festival worth its salt has to have its own gimmick these days, and *Primal Rage* ups the ante somewhat by featuring not one, but two such gimmicks. First of all, it features dinosaurs in place of the usual boring old humans. Second, the sprites are in fact digitised puppets, brought to life via the stop-motion animation techniques so beloved of Ray Harryhausen and the makers of *King Kong*. Pour a load of special moves and combos over the top, add a whopping great sprig of gore, and there you have it – guaranteed commercial success.

Er, providing it's fun to play, of course. Which, thankfully, this is. The conversion has gone rather well – for which Teeny Weeny Games (the people responsible for *Discworld*) should be heartily congratulated. The sprites are satisfyingly large, the action smooth, and the sound effects spot on. The gameplay of the arcade original has survived the journey to the PC unscathed as well, and there's even a couple of extra playing modes chucked in for good measure. Fans of *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* should like this – I'd be surprised if they didn't lap it up.

(Below) I am plasticine. Hear me roar.

(Below right) Ooh! Referee!

Dino dynamite

Beat 'em ups tend to get short shrift from most 'serious' PC gamesplayers; they're often denounced as shallow children's games, which is a bit rich coming from people who like spending their free time on the computer pretending to hack their way through a monster-packed labyrinth, or imagining they're piloting an F-29 over Iraq. Sit down and play one with a friend for a few hours and you'll discover that beneath all the chopsocky action, the best beat 'em ups are basically lightning-fast strategy games which get better each time you play them. And while *Primal Rage* isn't quite a classic, such as the aforementioned *Street Fighter II*, it's got more than its fair share of top-hole thrills and spills. Some of the special moves have to be seen to be believed, too (see panel, right).

All in all, it's a corker. If you've already got a scrapping sim for your PC, then you can live without this, but if you haven't – or if you're a die-hard fighting fan – then I'd recommend *Primal Rage* wholeheartedly. But for god's sake: only play it with a joypad or joystick (preferably one with four buttons), and don't expect a bundle of fun unless you're playing against a real live friend (but for best results one who isn't as skilled as you are). Z

Tech specs

Note: Double-speed CD drive required
Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Use a joypad, in the name of God, use a joypad!

Bodily fluid frenzy!

As I said, some of the moves in *Primal Rage* have to be seen to be believed. On the highest 'naughtiness' level, you'll see a few things that are a little more disgusting than you'd expect. Here's a list of just a few of the moves featured in the game – the names of which should give you the gist of what I'm on about:

Grape Crusher
Face Ripper
Power Puke
Flying Butt Slam
Fart of Fury (as illustrated below!)
Golden Shower
(yes, you don't need much imagination, it's exactly what you think it is)

Score

82

***Jurassic Park* for psychopaths.**

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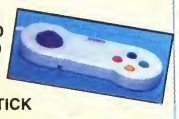
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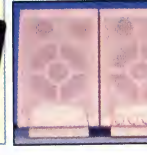
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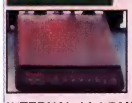

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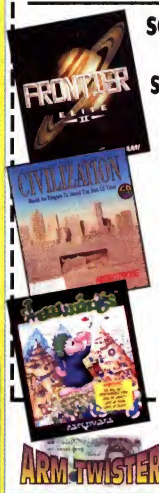

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Darker

"Have you noticed how it's been getting darker much earlier lately?" Paul Presley never was one for social chitchat. His jokes aren't up to much, either...

BEACONS. LOVELY, GLISTENING, SHINY, environmentally-friendly energy beacons. That's what *Darker* is all about, eco-terrorism and what a bad thing pollution is. It's not even subtle, it practically screams, "Think green you non-recycling, atmosphere-polluting, ozone-depleting, spray a bit of deodorant under your arms, don't bother with a catalytic converter, build radiation-spewing power plants in the rain forest and kill off any indigenous life forms and lessen the habitation levels of the entire planet bastard, you!"

One legal consultation later...

The environmental theme continues; *Darker* is based around two very separate civilisations living on a strange polygon-based planet. The Delphi (good, clean-living and environmentally friendly) and the Halons (bad, evil-minded and pollutants), both keeping to their respective sides of the globe. Being bad, the Halons have pretty much destroyed their half with chemicals and toxins and have now set their sights on conquering the remaining space. Oh, and because of some strange planetary rotation thing, the Halons live in a perpetually light environment, while the Delphi (and here's the twist) live in constant darkness. Hence the name *Darker*. Clever, innit? (Shakes head, rolls eyes, exits stage left.)

The only problem you'll encounter is the fact that until now the Delphi have been remarkably peaceable, which means that they suffer from a dire lack of zippy little easily-merchandiseable fighter craft and weapons, and also have horribly limited combat experience. Unfortunately the mean old Halons could give Genghis Khan a run for his shiny trinkets and are attacking in force. All you have are a few converted passenger shuttles and a busy Research & Development team to fend off the attackers. Go for it, hero!

And the beacons come into it... when?

Yes, the beacons are the root of *Darker's* evil. It's an intelligent premise which in the cold, hard light of day doesn't work nearly as well as it should. Your craft doesn't have any internal power of its own, you see. All of the energy comes from nearby Energy Beacons. The closer you fly to one, the faster you go and the more you can fire (everything being linked to the same sources of power). Not a bad idea in theory and one that would have been quite a twist to the usual fuel problems. The only trouble is, it doesn't make for good play. For a start you have little control over the speed of your ship; there you are lining up a shot on a hovering bad guy when suddenly you stray too close to a beacon. Your ship lurches forward and gains height, throwing your shot right off. Of course for a console joypad with limited buttons you have to find a way around the velocity setting problem...

So who's a cynical little bunny then?

I don't mean to be, it's just that every time I sit down with *Darker* I feel like it should be on a console. It's a simple polygon-based shoot 'em up. Nothing fancy like a flight simulator, just your usual fly-around-and-shoot-the-bad-guys stuff. A million games like it, a million still to come. In a word, average. And what more need be said? Z

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 386DX
Hard Disk Space: 12Mb
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard or joystick

(Above) "From perpetual twilight a vision is born. To be in the dark is nought but a blessing." – Keats (probably).

(Right) Long Distance Clara makes a welcome, long overdue return to our screens.

(Far left) Possibly the two most uncool looking fighter craft you'll ever see in a game. Way to hit that youth market Psyggy!

(Left) A fighter from the Harley Davidson school of sidebars.

(Far left) "Sir! We've run out of production money! We can't afford any Hollywood film stars for the video clips. What shall we do?" "Sod it man, use a programmer." "Yes sir!"

Score

62

Now't special, just typical console stuff.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Psygnosis/Sony Interactive
Tel: 0151-282 3000

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

When Charlie Brooker gets trigger happy, you'd better run for cover. The *PC Zone* team asks if it's safe to come out now...

PC Gamegun with Crime Patrol

(Left) Go on, show us yer tits luv...

"HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN," SANG the Beatles on their Manson-inspiring opus, *The White Album* – and although John Lennon would no doubt disagree with that rather bold statement given his current condition, they were probably right. Guns are definitely *in* at the moment, so what better accessory to buy for your beloved PC than a gun of its very own? Lovingly tooled from the finest lurid orange plastic, the American Laser Games PC Gamegun connects to your PC and allows you to play all those *Mad Dog McCree*-style live action shoot em 'ups the way they should be played, right in your very own home. What better remedy could there possibly be for relieving that end-of-the-millennium angst, that trembling, pent-up rage that seethes within? Line 'em up like lambs to the slaughter. Pop pop pop. Gee, doc, I can feel my stress levels dipping every time I see another head explode.

Yesiree, this here fluorescent magnum simply plugs into your parallel (printer) port, and then to the joystick port, and blow me down if it doesn't herald the dawning of a new age in PC gaming history. Just hook up the gun, slap in the free game bundled with it, and off you go. Er, once you've calibrated the gun that is. And that's a bit of a pig – a process you'll probably have to repeat at least three or four times before you've sorted out that essential bang-on aim.

(Below) Another piece of human dogshit hurtles toward certain death as Righteous Justice prevails.

(Below right) The 1995 Car and Barrel Outdoor Ballroom dancing championship.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486
Hard Disk Space: Minimal
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick or PC Gamegun

Game for a laugh

The game *Crime Patrol* included in the package wins my 'Comedy Release of the Year' award. It revolves around shooting countless 'punks' in the face, arms and neck, and I swear I have never laughed out loud at a game so often in my life. It's like every cheesy cop show rolled into one, with an unhealthy level of glee in providing sadistic touches to the action. Sometimes blasting a crook five times in the face at close range just isn't enough. No, no, no. And the producers know this, so sometimes you'll shoot someone, and he'll tumble backwards into an electrified gate and get fried, or he'll topple off a balcony and plummet to his death. There's a man who's been set on fire running about and yelping 'amusing' things like "Oooh! I'm burning up!". Then there's the undercover sergeant who machine-guns a car-boot full of cocaine while screaming, "Winners don't use drugs!" Ooh, I laughed till I cried. Well, nearly.

Unfortunately the fun palls a tad too quickly, and once you've finished the game (which won't take long), you're unlikely to return to it all that often (unless you've got friends round and you're all drinking beer, from cans, like men). Still, you can use the gun with other games in the series (all pretty much identical), and £39.99 for a gun and a game ain't bad, so if you fancy a little Smith & Wesson, you may as well give this a shot. Boom boom. Z

Calling American Laser Games

American Laser Games, the people behind the PC Gamegun, are no spring chickens when it comes to interactive video killing sprees. They've produced a whole string of games, mostly with a Wild West flavour, such as the *Mad Dog McCree* titles. But I reckon the Wild West is boring. I want to see some different scenarios – ones that I feel will enhance the player's enjoyment of the action immeasurably. So here's my list of 'Dream Lightgun Game Scenarios':

- Tory Party Conference
- The roughest pub in town at closing time
- *Grease* at the Dominion Theatre, starring Shane Richie
- Stadium full of squawking American tourists
- Sesame Street
- Castle Donington Monsters of Rock Festival
- Taxi Driver Interactive
- Chessington World of Adventures, on the hottest Bank Holiday of the year

None of them would involve any kind of plot, and all would dish out huge bonuses for each innocent bystander who gets it in the face. So there.

Score

70

Interactive TV for the maniac in your life.

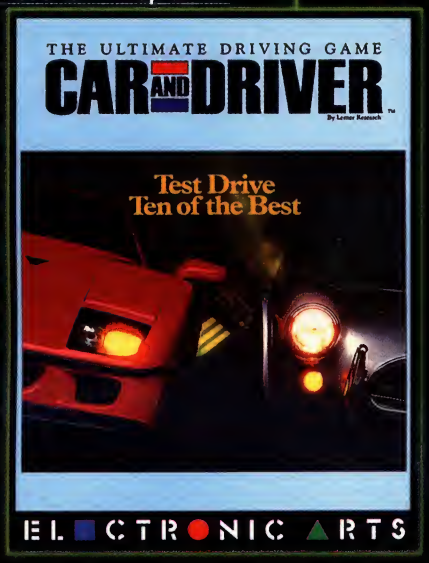
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: American Laser Games/Mirage
Tel: 01260 299909

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

hit names @ hit squad

applying a feelgood price tag

"You're in for a treat." "State-of-the-art graphics put it close to the top of the league of PC simulations." "The game is Terrific." PC REVIEW



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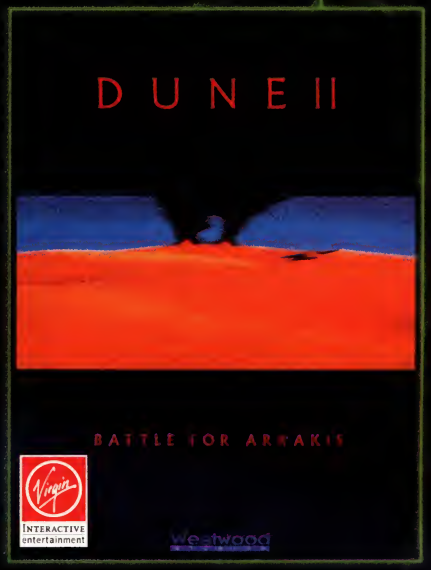

"The best strategy game ever." PC FORMAT "Put it at the top of your 'must-have' list immediately." "A timeless classic." PC HOME

94%

"The graphcs are superb." "One of the best flight sims I have ever played." 5 STARS PC LEISURE

"Get this one!! ZERO

94%

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The game: *NHL Hockey '96*, boasting vastly enhanced aesthetics and a brimming bucket load of spanking new features. The reviewer: Toby Finlay '96, looking much the same and still unable to write decent intros. Ah, the wonder of progress.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

NHL Hockey '96

THERE ARE TWO THINGS WHICH Christmas brings without fail: the Queen's speech, and an update of an EA sports game. Unfortunately, *NHL Hockey '95* was scarcely different from the previous year's *NHL Hockey* (rather like the Queen's speech). But this time around, EA is really giving us something new. Yes, *NHL '96* is still quintessentially *NHL Hockey*, but at the same time it's almost inconceivably different. In fact, the difference is so huge it's a bit like the Queen deciding one year to throw all that speech malarkey to the wind, look straight into the camera, and pop out her funbags for the lads.

Special cynic

Now some world-weary people pour nothing but scorn upon EA's annual revamps. A touch of scepticism was partly justified with *NHL '95*, because, as mentioned, it wasn't a vast improvement over its predecessor. Always on the frontline of games criticism, we at *PC Zone* asked our most cynical of cynical correspondents to assess just how radical the new version really is. So ladies and gentlemen, I give you Mr Algernon Gitt.

(Algernon decided to telephone EA because he was too lazy to visit them.)

EA's phone: Ring-ring.

A Gitt: Ring all you bloody like. No one's going to answer you.

EA: Hello?

A Gitt: Oh, er, yes. I want to know about this new hockey game. Like, is it bollocks or what?

EA: Wait just a moment please.

A Gitt: We're all waiting – waiting for this goddamn awful world to claim our already pathetically wretched lives.

EA: Ah yes, *NHL '96*. We're rather proud of this one...

A Gitt: Don't be. Time will render your pride as futile as any other human emotion or achievement.

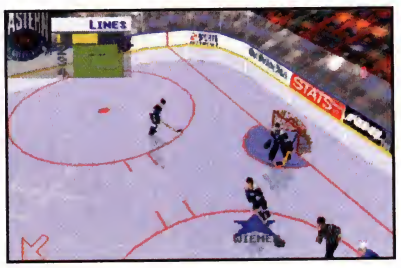
EA: Put a sock in it, you miserable bastard. We're proud because we've really revolutionised the game. For example, the player is no longer limited to a mundane top-down scrolling pitch: the entire stadium is three-dimensional, and you can flick at will between 11 camera angles. We've maintained the supreme playability of the first two games and even a complete imbecile will be whizzing around the ice after just a nano-second's practice – whizzing being the operative word, given the speed of the 3D engine. Moreover, anoraks will find themselves catered for like never before, with literally hundreds of player photographs and statistics. And here's the best bit: we've finally bowed to public demand and added fight sequences!

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/50 (Pentium recommended)
Hard Disk Space: 13Mb
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, gamepad

(Below) Just one of about ten billion camera views. Hint: when playing against a friend, cunningly change the view when they're about to score. That'll put the willies up the blighter.

(Left) The excellent action replay screen. Now I can watch this bastard take my legs from under me again and again.



(Left) The infamous fight bit. Pull the other bloke's shirt over his head and then thump the shite out of him. Heh heh.

A Gitt: And you really expect me to be gratified at this endorsement of inter-personal conflict?
EA: Oh sod off then.
A Gitt: *(Decides to boot the CD to look for himself)* Stone the crows! It's all true! EA really has created a next-generation PC sports sim! My word! It's so fast, even with all the detail on full (on a P90 anyway), and the presentation is thoroughly flawless – you even get Whitney Houston singing the national anthem at the start of each match. That's it – my days of cynicism and nastiness are over. I'm off to pick some flowers and help some old people change their colostomy bags.

Puck off

All of the stats sections will be familiar to *NHL* regulars. You can create players, organise tournaments, play through seasons and indulge in loads of other hockey-related japery, but it's the arcade sections that really set the game apart. Like the previous incarnations, all the moves you might need (from just merely passing to smacking fellow sportsmen in the marf) are easily accessed with just two buttons – but that's where any similarities end.

Yes indeedy, this is every sports sim fan's dream game. Imagine an action replay feature in which you can move the camera with the mouse to any angle you please. Imagine yourself playing with four friends simultaneously. Imagine that you own a 14400 baud ninja-modem and can play matches over the phone. Imagine Maggie Philben telling you that the future is actually now, like she used to every week on *Tomorrow's World*. (Just make sure you don't imagine her going home afterwards for a quick game of hide the sausage with Keith Chegwin.)

Do the Hockey Cokey

As far as the consumer goes, I have to admit that I think EA is taking the mick somewhat by persisting with these updates. Good as they invariably are, it might be a little less abrasive on the games-playing public to release them biennially at the most. But – and this is the largest but since Vanessa Feltz thought she'd slip on a miniskirt – what it comes down to is this: *NHL '96* is brilliant. If you want a stylish and slick sports sim for your PC, you'll basically have to choose between *NHL '96* or the forthcoming *FIFA '96*. **Z**

Girls & Boys

"Girls who want boys who like boys to be girls..." Words of wisdom indeed *(Yeah, right – Ed)*. Still, *Blur*'s incisive commentary on humanity's sexually dichotomic nature palls in comparison to that provided by the game of hockey. Normal hockey (ie played on sodden outdoor pitches) was obviously seen by Canadian menfolk to be a bit of a girl's blouse game. So they transferred it to a near-frictionless surface – and a very cold one at that. Nice one: full marks for blokeishness. Yet consider this: girlies run up and down the pitch clad only in flimsy garments and caked in mud *(Now you're talking – Ed)*, whereas the so-called hard lads carry around twice their body weight in protective armour. Now who wears the trousers, eh? Or, as those pithy philosophers *Blur* might have it, "Gorden bleedin' blimey whelks dahn the market where's me Capri whoops! missus..." *(Shut up – Ed)*.

Score

90

A superb version of a good version of a smart game.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Jeremy Wells was desperate to try and get the words 'fore' and 'play' into the next golf game review. We tried to tell him that it wasn't even funny, but he just went ahead and did it anyway. Sorry.

PGA Tour 96

THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO SAY that the best golf game ever is most definitely *Links*. These people own 386s, wear cardigans and think that CD-ROM is a passing fad. They've never played *Doom*, think *Deathmatch* is what you use to light a cigarette, and say 'in your opinion' when you're trying to have an argument with them. Fools. There's more to life than *Links*. There's *PGA 486* for example, and now there's *PGA Tour 96*.

If it ain't broke...?

Well, to be honest, I thought you couldn't get much better than the last effort – with a beefy machine it was tops. Yeah, the access time was pretty slow and it took a while to load up, but it was worth the wait. All those beautifully rendered fairways, golfers and options, it just looked gorgeous and played like a dream. If the golfers had been wearing funny trousers and EA Sports had released some more courses, it would never have left my disc caddy.

As it is, the disc accessing and screen re-draw rate has been speeded up by 200% so it's much quicker to play – a bonus if you aren't the proud owner of a spanking new Pentium.

EA has also added this new 'Waggle' feature which not only enables you to hit the ball 'fat' or 'thin', but makes it a bit more difficult as well. Apart from that, there's little else to say apart from the fact that it's still the best golf game available for the PC, it's jam-packed with options, and that as EA Sports plans to bring out more course disks very soon it's probably a good idea to go and buy it right now, even if you already own a copy of *PGA 486*. And that's my opinion. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Hard Disk Space: 2.5Mb minimum
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

There are loads of different player modes, ranging from Skins to Tournament; if you don't like something you can probably turn it off and it's just the tops.

How to waste a good walk...

New & improved

PGA 486 was brilliant, *PGA Tour 96* is even better. Here's why...

- Two new Championship courses are included – TPC at Avenel and Spyglass Hill.
- You can play *as* or *against* 14 actual photo-realistic swinging PGA Tour Pros and they all have really bad taste in clothes *and* an FMV biography.
- There's an 'all new' INSTAVIEW thing that lets you see any part of the course at any time. Handy to see if someone's spying on you (like the baddies checking out James Bond in *Goldfinger*).
- There's a real-time ball cam thing so you can see where your ball is going as it flies through the air.
- The crowd are all in camouflage (well I can't see 'em) and go 'Oooh' and 'Aaah' when you mess up.
- There's a new picture-in-picture (PIP) view, so you can simultaneously view your shots from a reverse angle perspective as well as from behind your golfer. A nice feature, but it does mean you see where your ball will land before it actually lands.
- There's the unique 'Target Arc System' which shows the trajectory of your ball and a new 'Waggle' feature which enables you to hit your ball either 'fat' or 'thin' – useful for getting over or under trees. You've still got Draw and Fade too.
- There is a fly-by movie of each hole, rendered from tee to green, complete with audio commentary and some pretty fab easy listening music. Val Doonican fans will love it.

Score

94

The best golf game just got better.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

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Battle Beast

Charlie Brooker's animal instincts take over as he finds himself in... a sewer.

VIOLENCE AND CARTOON ANIMATION have always gone hand in hand. Ever since man learned that a simple succession of hand-drawn images could breathe life into imaginary characters, he's been using the technique to fold, spindle and mutilate cartoon cats, dogs, coyotes and people on a regular basis for comedic effect. And it's just as well really, because if animation had never been invented the antics of a live-action *Tom & Jerry* would have had both audience and RSPCA up in arms.

Anyway, *Battle Beast* marks the point at which toon violence reaches its logical conclusion – now it's interactive. For this is a CD-based title (optimised to run under Windows 95, folks), which features nothing but Tex Avery-style fairly violent surrealism wrapped around yer standard two-player beat 'em up game. First impressions are good. The animation is indeed excellent, and the characters and backdrops are of a higher quality than most Saturday morning cartoon shows. Best of all, the cut scenes and special effects are genuinely amusing and even the voiceovers can force quite a chuckle.

The plot, such as it is, seems to revolve around a gang of mutated frogs which have invaded the city. No longer content with sitting on lily pads and croaking in the time-honoured tradition of frogdom, these little green snotrags have developed a taste for anarchic social disruption and eating postmen (two of my favourite hobbies, as it goes). And erm... you've got to beat up a lot of animals to save the day. Or something like that.

Anyhow, it runs like this: you (or you and a friend if you're playing together) choose an animal (ranging from cute l'il poodles to slippery mudskippers) and prepare for battle. Next there's a bizarre little 'stage selection' section which involves you and your opponent racing through the city's sewerage system in an attempt to arrive at a location first – then it's fisticuffs time. During the ensuing scrap, your creature can morph from a relatively harmless mammal into a cyberoid mutant Battle Beast from Hell. As you'd expect, there's plenty of special moves, all of which are suitably over-the-top given the cartoon feel of the game (we're talking teeny cute puppies wielding gigantic hammers here). In fact, some of the moves are arse-bitingly funny.

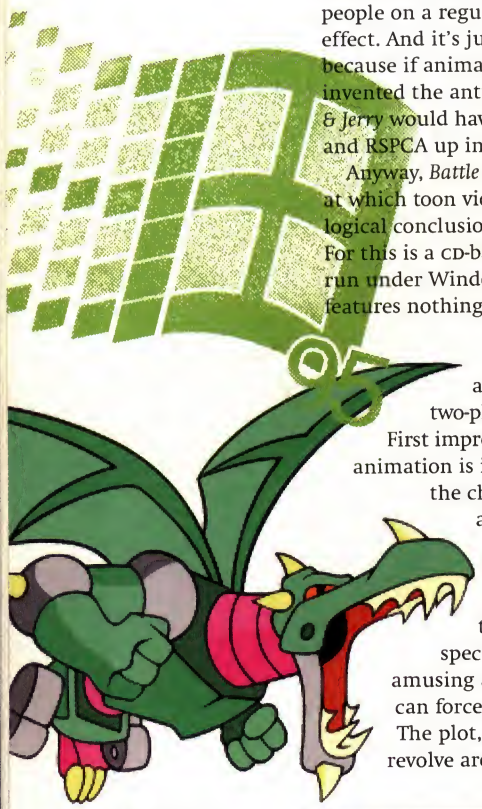
Cartoon crisis

Sounds great, doesn't it? So why has it earned such a mediocre score? Well, there's a problem. Yup, you guessed it – the gameplay sucks. The single most important factor in any fighting game is the sense of control you have over your character; if you don't know what's going on you end up just slapping all the buttons and hoping for the best. And that's what happens in *Battle Beast*. Sometimes the animals react too slowly to your keystrokes, sometimes they don't react at all. The controls are awkward on a keyboard (although you can redefine the keys), and don't feel much better on a joypad. Ultimately, you're unlikely to come back for more.

It's a crying shame, because the game looks so gorgeous that I really wanted it to be good. A quality cartoon beat 'em up is certainly an excellent idea – but it's all for nothing if the basic gameplay isn't up to scratch. Sorry, *Battle Beast*. Fingers crossed for 7th Level sorting out the gameplay and releasing a sequel. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/33
Hard Disk Space: Minimal
Graphics: VGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard
Notes: Windows 95 recommended (although it will run under Windows 3.1 or higher)



(Above) It's not surprising you morph into a Battle Beast after diving about in a sewer.

(Right) I warned you not to sit on that!

Score

68

Awww, it's just not fair.

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: 7th Level
Tel: 01932 569606

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

"WingMan equals maximum control. I love this thing, man!"
Billy Mather
Supreme Warrior of the Cyber Skies
• Blast away with perfectly positioned, non-slip buttons.
• Welcome to the grip that really grips.
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PC CD-ROM

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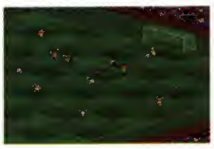

- Play - Watch - Predict - Match Highlights - Multi Speed Scanner
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ANCO

Published by Anco Software Ltd, Unit 7 Millside Industrial Estate, Lawson Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 5BH Tel: 01322 292513 Fax: 01322 293422. Screenshots are illustrative of gameplay only and may vary from format to format. Requires a joystick.

A hush gathered over the *PC Zone* office as we waited for Paul Lakin to make some stunningly amusing joke about Swan Vestas and Raleigh Choppers in his intro to *Burn:Cycle*. Unfortunately he couldn't be bothered. (He can be a real git sometimes.)

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Burn:Cycle

SOL CUTTER HAS A LOT ON HIS MIND – namely the Burn:Cycle virus (a computer virus that people can catch; a spookily cyclical kind of concept when you think about it). Ah well, that's what comes of trying to download Softech computer software into your brain to sell it to a rival company. Don't try this at home kids.

Cutter has but two hours to locate the source of the virus and get rid of it (presumably by installing Dr Solomon version 23434 through his left nostril) before his brain gets used for the base of someone's sherry trifle. And how is our anti-hero going to go about freeing his mind? Well, he's going to run around a bit, do some shooting, talk to some people, collect some objects and solve some puzzles. As the great Rolf of Harris would say, "Can you tell what it is yet?".

Why yes, it's an interactive adventure complete with *Blade Runner* graphics, stomping sci-fi soundtrack and lots of weirdly ambient dream/net sequences. Been there before? Frankly I've been there so often that I've got my own deck chair on the beach.

See me, feel me, crib me

So we've seen it all before but the game is worthy of a second look. After all, it received rave reviews when it came out on CD-i last year – though it wasn't exactly up against stiff opposition; in fact it was barely up against any opposition at all. The world of CD-ROM is a lot more competitive, with barrow loads of first-person perspective interactive adventures. (They're in barrows, 'cos that's where people usually chuck them when they realise that there's naff all gameplay and the video sequences are badly filmed, badly acted and take about a month to access.) *Burn:Cycle* makes mincemeat of most of the competition (as it does with most of the characters in the game).

First off the graphics are outstanding – albeit being yet another homage to *Blade Runner* – while the video sequences are far slicker, quicker and less intrusive than usual. The script and acting are generally strong and – hallelujah! – the cast tend to speak English rather than American.

The puzzles are a mixed bunch. Some of the arcade-style ones are a bit gratuitously tagged on like mini games within a game (shades of ye olde *7th Guest*) and can be a tad easy. On more than one occasion I solved one without really having a clear idea of what I was supposed to be doing. However, there are other puzzles and (more often) adventure-style problems that are considerably more taxing – and the race against time means the foot is kept on the tension pedal.

Time for action

If there is a problem or disappointment with *Burn:Cycle* it's the arcade sequences (aka the shooty bits). Although there's plenty of blood and gore, the fact that you get a laser sight on screen a few moments before an enemy appears tends to take away the element of surprise. Also, as is the way with video-based games, if you go through the same part of the map twice (or thrice) the same person will leap out from the same place despite having had his lower intestine tickled by a laser only minutes before. You wouldn't get that happening in *Doom*. The limited range of movement is also frustrating. If you're more used to out and out shoot 'em ups, being able to move only in certain directions is a pain. This wouldn't happen in *Doom* either.

Apart from that the game, although not necessarily a ground breaker, is one of the best interactive adventures I've seen. After a slowish and fairly undemanding start it soon gets up to speed. Good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make an outstanding game. Above all it has a balding hero which in my book is worth an extra 5% any day. **Z**

(Left) Nice little motor – wonder where I left the key?

(Right) Oi! Spam-head!

(Below) Oi! Egg-head!

(Far left) Kris does her bit for the game's 15 certificate.

(Left) Awright my loves – The Generation Game 21st century-style.

Tech specs

Note: Requires Windows 3.1
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/33 (66 recommended)
Hard Disk Space: Minimal
Graphics: VGA
Sound: Windows-compatible sound card
Controls: Mouse

Score

85

Good news for the interactive adventure. Even better news for the follically challenged.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Philips
Tel: 0171-911 3081

Chris Anderson was delighted to receive an invitation to visit Microsoft in Seattle, and then even more thrilled to be forced to down more beer than was possibly good for him.

(Left) Tony Garcia, the man behind Microsoft's push into the games market.

Microsoft Company Profile

When a company as big and influential as Microsoft tells you that it's planning to take the games industry by storm, you have to take it seriously. With the business software market already neatly tucked away in its over-sized pockets, it's now turning its attention to PC gamers everywhere in an attempt to expand its domination of the home PC market even further still.

Bill Gates – Mr Microsoft himself – has already bought up several major Japanese game companies (yes, tons of console-style games are about to invade your PC!), and Microsoft has been busy signing up big names from major game developers over the past year. So what does all this mean to you? Well, I spent a week in Seattle trying to find out. Although the Microsoft PR team completely blanked me every time I asked them what their future game releases were going to be like (hence yet more screenshots of *Fury 3* in *PC Zone*), I got a pretty good idea of both how Microsoft will be approaching the games market, and how Windows 95 will perform as a games platform. Of equal importance, of course, are the people behind the scenes currently working on bringing Microsoft's new generation of games to your PC...

From one gamer to another

Mention the name Tony Garcia and most people will probably look blank; it may not mean very much to you, but he has worked behind the scenes for several games developers. He started his career at Epyxx (of *California Games* fame), went on to Sega and then finally landed a job at Lucasfilm games, where he worked on the production of *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* and *Indiana Jones*. He's now sitting comfortably at the helm of Microsoft's imminent surge into the games market, and by all accounts he seems a very pleasant chap; he was certainly very accommodating to the group of ten British journalists (myself included), which was a mercy as we were all suffering from 'first night in Seattle' hangovers. He came across as very professional and polite, and his obvious passion for games is evident in almost every word he says.

(Above) Microsoft games hopefully won't look like this anymore.

(Left) The first biggie from Microsoft, Fury 3. Er, haven't we seen this before somewhere?

When asked why Microsoft has suddenly taken the plunge and decided to become a big player on the games scene he replied, "We feel we can now sell to home users because they are buying PCs for home entertainment".

It could be argued that this has been the case for some time now, but I suspect the real reason behind the move is the well-publicised release of Windows 95 which, for the first time, makes Windows a viable games platform. Indeed, Tony is very quick to point out Microsoft's advantages in this respect: "The first thing most people see when they turn on their PC is Microsoft Windows," he says, skillfully avoiding the fact that many still see the ugly side of Microsoft too, ie DOS.

"This gives us the advantage of having a very large existing user base to sell to. Additionally, many Windows users are unaccustomed to playing games, so they'll feel more comfortable with Windows 95 products than Windows 3.1 or DOS products." To underline Microsoft's commitment to its games projects, it's currently developing titles that address every games genre in existence.

As far as new titles go, the only thing we saw that hasn't already been covered in the associated press was *MicroProse Golf 2*. This has new multimedia fly-bys (as seen in *Links*), hi-res graphics, skins play and multimedia tips to improve your technique. It also has a soccer game in development which uses motion capture technology to make the player sprites look more realistic; from what I saw it didn't look very good, although to be honest the version on display was a very early one, so it may change dramatically by the time it's finished.

So to a large extent the big question of whether or not Microsoft will be a major force in the games industry is still left unanswered – a lot will depend on its first few games releases. With all the hype surrounding Windows 95 and all the promises made about the platform being ideal for PC games, great things will be expected of Microsoft's early releases. If it fails to produce anything outstanding, the games press is sure to pounce on it mercilessly. We'll have to wait and see. **Z**

Multi-player mania

Microsoft is currently working on a multi-player system called 'playernet'. This will be used as a common interface for all Microsoft's multi-player games and will allow up to eight players to send messages over a network. The chaps at Microsoft fully recognise the fact that multi-player games are becoming increasingly popular and now feel in a position to take advantage of it. Initially, the code for playernet won't be released to external developers as Microsoft is keen to have the competitive edge. However, it may reconsider this decision if playernet proves very popular.

Home of the Giant

Most companies, even very large ones, are quite content to buy expansive buildings for their employees. But Microsoft has gone one better – it's built an entire campus for its staff. The Microsoft campus is very, very big and foreboding and as it all looks exactly the same, it's quite easy to get hopelessly lost. It's here that all the Microsoft games will be tested, and they even have special labs set up with video cameras to record the reactions of the gamers trying out the new products; this means that the developers can see exactly where people are having problems and alter the games accordingly.

Microsoft also has a sparsely furnished children's area for testing educational products and games. To me, it looks, well, scary, so God knows what the average kiddie will think when they're taken there and told to get on with it. But apparently this is all going to change; Microsoft is building a new kiddies' area, complete with colourful furnishings and pretty pictures on the wall, just so that the little ones will feel at home. Hooray!

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A classic platformer gets the Windows 95 treatment – Chris Anderson has a good look to see whether this version will have him hooked.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

THIS GAME WAS OUT YONKS AGO ON the Atari 2600, and has since been followed by various console versions. This new one, written specifically for the all-new, all-singing and dancing Windows 95, looks better than the lot of them.

The Mayan Adventure sees you take on the role of Harry junior, with the task of tracking down an evil Mayan warrior spirit and rescuing your father, Pitfall Harry. The game is played out over 13 massive levels and you'll have to go through a lot of running, jumping, climbing, skating and hacking and slashing before you eventually make your way to the end of it.

As far as the gameplay is concerned, it's fairly standard platform stuff. Nasties come at you from all directions but you have various ways of disposing of them: you can chuck your boomerang at them, attack them with your Indiana Jones-style whip, throw stones at them – or if you're a poof you can simply run away or jump over them.

There are secret areas to find and if you locate them you are rewarded with a rather naff bonus game of some description. One of these 'extras' involves snatching goodies from underneath a boulder which is lowered until you either get bored and run away, or stand underneath it and get squashed. There is also a version of the original *Pitfall* game hidden in one of these locations but it's utterly awful. If you don't fancy playing any of these dodgy bonus games, don't worry, you can easily duck out of them whenever you want and get back to the real action.

Many of the locations in the game can only be accessed once you've solved a puzzle, and as most of them are generally pretty easy, you never really get stuck in any one place. A welcome feature (which is sadly absent in many platformers) is the ability to start the game at any level you've already completed. This, of course, avoids ploughing through tons of stuff you've already seen.

The graphics are very crisp and the main sprite is well animated and moves very smoothly. This may or may not be down to the fact that this is a Windows 95 game, but it's difficult to tell without having a DOS or standard Windows version to compare it with. Either way, the sprite animation is better than most games of this type currently knocking about on the PC.

So what's it like to play? Well, it's actually fairly addictive – I played it for about three hours without getting bored. As a flagship games product for Windows 95 however (Bill Gates keeps it on his portable to show off the new version of Windows), it's not going to take the world by storm. Z

(Left) An end of level monstie. Not very scary, is he?

(Below left) These disappearing steps will drive you potty.

(Below right) This little bloke tells you where you need to go.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/33
Hard Disk Space: N/A
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse

Score

70

Addictive and good-looking version of an old classic.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Activision **Tel:** 0181-742 9400

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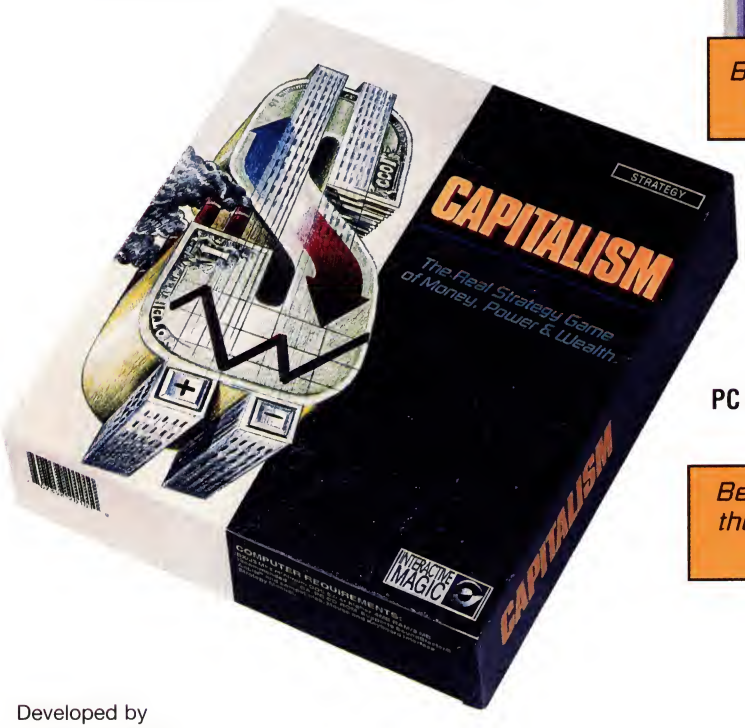

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Al Unser Jr Arcade Racing

Chris Anderson takes a look at Mindscape's new racing game and wins the award for saying 'Windows 95' more times than anyone else in this issue of *PC Zone*.

WINDOWS 95 HAS ARRIVED (BLOODY *hell, he's off already! – Ed)* and with it come the first games designed specifically to run under it. So far it's not looking too good – we've got *Pitfall* from Activision (reviewed on page 89), which is an okayish platformer but nothing particularly special. *Fury 3* is on the way from Microsoft and although it looks very pretty it's basically an alternative version of *Terminal Velocity* – and let's face it, we've seen it all before. And then of course there's Mindscape joining in the fun with *Al Unser Junior*, a new racing game which takes full advantage of Microsoft's new operating system.

My first impression of the game when I loaded it up was that it looked a bit, er, basic – it certainly won't be rivalling MicroProse's *FGP12* in the graphics department. However, Mindscape is promoting *Al Unser* as a simple arcade game, so presumably the lack of graphic detail is down to the fact that fast, exhilarating action takes priority.

Well, it's certainly fast

By the time you reach top gear you're whizzing around the tracks, skidding all over the place and bumping into lots of other cars (if you're crap like me, that is) and generally going completely out of control. In my defence however, the steering is a tad too sensitive; move the wheel at high speeds and you'll find yourself careering wildly off the track and coming a cropper. This is something I thought I'd get used to after a while, but even after repeated play I didn't feel any more comfortable with it. I suspected it might just be my inferior gameplaying skills, so I got some of the office bods to have a go and they all had the same problem. It's a pain, but it's not the end of the world.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2 or above
Hard Disk Space: Nominal for saves
Graphics: VGA
Sound: Windows compatible sound card
Controls: Joystick, keyboard

Despite the slightly dodgy control system, playing *Al Unser* gives you quite a few laughs for a couple of hours, and it has all the features you'd expect from a racing game: a choice of cars, 15 racing circuits to zoom around on to your heart's content, ten drivers to compete with and three difficulty levels. It also has the added distinction of sporting the name of *Al Unser* who, of course, is a 'legendary Indianapolis 500 winner'.

Unfortunately, at the end of the day *Al Unser* simply doesn't have sufficient fun factor to keep you coming back for more. So, the great Windows 95 games phenomenon *(that's it, one more time and you're sacked – Ed)* has so far been a something of an anti-climax. However, if you really want to see what Mindscape can do with Windows 95 *(bye bye – Ed)*, hold out for the release of *Warhammer* which, from what I've seen of the Beta version, looks rather stunning. **Z**

(Right) Hi-res graphics but low on thrills.

Score

60

Look, it's not crap, it's just nothing special, OK? Good!

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Mindscape
Tel: 01444 246333

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Tony Split

He's a tightfisted git

Previously on Tony Split: Having foolishly taken the scrounging layabout into his home, Paul Presley is having a bad time of trying to get Tony to pay rent, clean up and generally become socially acceptable. Tonight's Episode: Tony Collects The Post.

The scene: funky theme tune in the background. It's morning. Paul walks into the living room to find Tony opening parcels.

Paul: Good morning Tony, you loveable old rogue you. Whassat? Someone sending you mail?

Tony: Naah. S'yours. Just thought it looked innerestin', didn't I?

Paul: (*Incredulously*) I can't believe it! You're opening my letter-type things? Crivens! Stop that foul and somewhat treasonous act at once!

Tony: Just a load of poncey software, innit? Those are from er... My crow's prose. And that lot's come from the boot of someone's Ford Sierra.

Paul: MicroProse and Sierra you mean, you misunderstanding fool.

Tony: Yeah, whatever. Borrow me 20 quid for the weekend will ya?

Paul: You still owe me 50 for the rent. Pay up by the end of the week or you're travelling back to No-Home Estate, Rooflessville.

Tony: You'll get it once me giro arrives.

Paul: You're not unemployed Tony. You have that job in the local off licence, remember?

Tony: Exactly. So what're the games like? *(Coughs. Belches. Farts)*

UFO

Winner of the 'Chris Anderson – Phew! What A Stonker!' award, and what higher praise could be bestowed? Personally, I'm not sure how to treat it. Held in awe by some, sniffed at haughtily by others, *UFO* is an interesting game that at this price might be worthy of a look if you hadn't considered it before. About as believable as The Roswell Tapes but more playable than *Outpost* at any rate.

SCORE ○○○○
PRICE £16.99

Civilization

Civilization heralded a whole new level for strategy games. No one could deny the 'classicness' of Sid Meier's masterful work but who could have predicted that he'd be surpassed not only by his own sequel – *Colonization* – but by *Machiavelli The Prince* as well? If you're into the whole world-domination groovy strategy love thang, you probably already have it, but stranger things have happened. (*Like why I ever agreed to give you this section. 'Groovy love thang' indeed! Ed.*)

SCORE ○○○○
PRICE £16.99

F1GP

Ha-hah! Now this is the real racing bunny. Forget that circular nonsense of the Americas this instant because here's what driving at high speed is all about. Fast, smooth, occasionally violent – and you even get to enter lots of silly names for the drivers. What more could you ask for? A budget price? Okey-doo, you got it.

There's little more to be said (the five star rating says it all really), just snap it up now at this low, low, price and at the same time help to gear yourself up for the imminent sequel *F1GP2*, which looks even fabber. (Check out *PC Zone* issue 30 for the full story.)

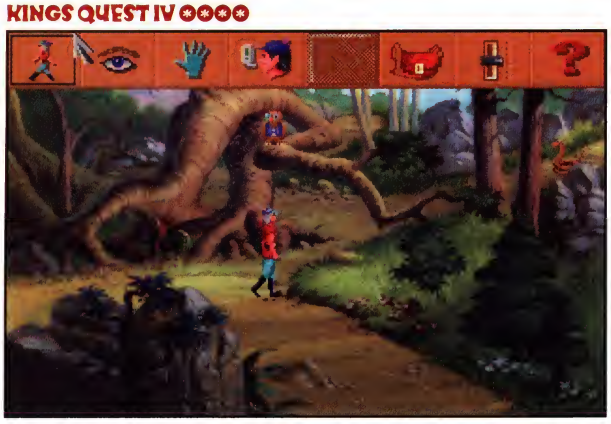
SCORE ○○○○○
PRICE £14.99

Fleet Defender

Despite suffering from a distinctly blocky looking seascape, MicroProse's most recent jaunt into the stratosphere is actually a damn playable journey. In my humble opinion the F-14 has been a much neglected fighter plane and it's about time we saw it swooping about the heavens and earning its Tomcat name. Okay, so the game could use a more user-friendly campaign/tutorial style interface, but otherwise it's class all the way.

SCORE ○○○○
PRICE £16.99

KINGS QUEST IV ○○○○



UFO ○○○○

ACES OVER EUROPE ✪✪✪✪

Aces Over Europe

Oh come on! Just five little poundlets for a game of this calibre? Either I'm no longer in Kansas *(You live in Shepherd's Bush, moron. Ed.)* or Sierra is being really aggressive with its prices. Alright, admittedly it's not the greatest flight sim ever made, but by Gum!, it's currently one of the cheapest and it's still playable. Plus, being old, it's likely to work on anyone's machine! And how many games can you say that about these days?

SCORE ✪✪✪✪
PRICE £4.99

King's Quest VI

For the love of Mikelti Williamson! Every time I think I've seen the back of this ridiculous twee nonsense, someone slaps me round the face with a brightly coloured box and says, "You like *King's Quest*, don't you? Review this". Well here I just have to draw the line. It's no good, I don't like *King's Quest*. Never have, never will. The fact that so far there have been seven of the buggers means that I've failed in what I consider my sacred duty to poison your minds against it. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, etc, etc, *ad infinitum*.

SCORE ✪
(on principle)
SCORE ✪✪✪✪
(on actual quality of game, and hey, it's cheap)
PRICE £4.99 TO £7.99

Lost In Time

I find it hard to be objective about Coktel Vision titles. I genuinely believe in what it's trying to do with these so-called 'new technologies'. The trouble is, with companies like Delphine putting even the Americans to constant shame with game design, and Cryo making everyone weep for joy with its graphics, it keeps getting lost. Oh, by the way *Lost In Time* is a very nice-looking adventure with real puzzles (those were the days, eh?) and a sexy chick to boot. *(Sexist git. Ed.)*

SCORE ✪✪✪✪
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LOST IN TIME ✪✪✪✪

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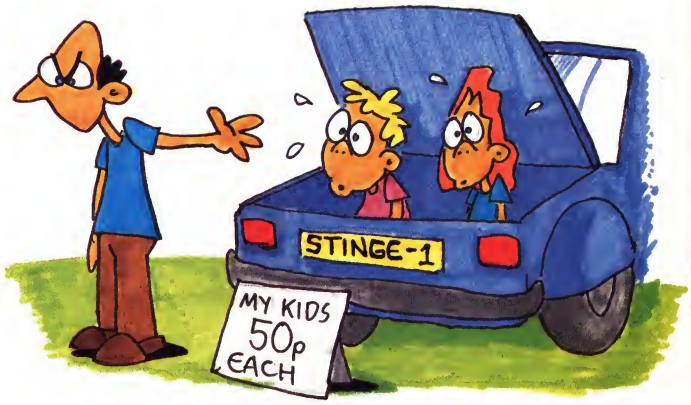
Probably the last *Space Quest* game that's actually worth playing.



Paul: So, Tony. What did you think of those digital delights?
Tony: All right, I guess. Listen, here's your rent money.
Paul: By all that's holy, Tony! Wherever did the currency come from?
Tony: Easy – I just went and sold all those games you reviewed.
Paul: Do what? But Tony, you money-hoarding demon from hell, those were mine! How am I supposed to build up an award-winning array of gaming pleasures if you sell them all?
Tony: I got the most for that *F1GP*. 'Spose it means it must be the best.
Paul: But Tonemeister, I wanted to play that one especially.
Tony: It's okay, don't worry about it, you wouldn't be able to anyway.
Paul: The meaning of which in exact terms is what?
Tony: I've just sold your PC for you.
Paul: My WHAT??? *(Cue gurgling noises, shaking shoulders and purple face.)*
Tony: This way fellas. It's in here.
(Enter three out of work jockeys carrying packing crates.)
Paul: Oi! That's mine!
(One ball-peen hammer later.)
Tony: Want a bandage for that head?
Paul: Get lost, git. Z

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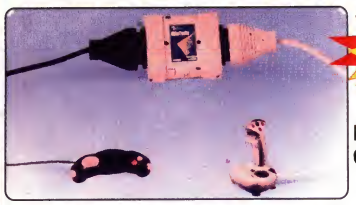

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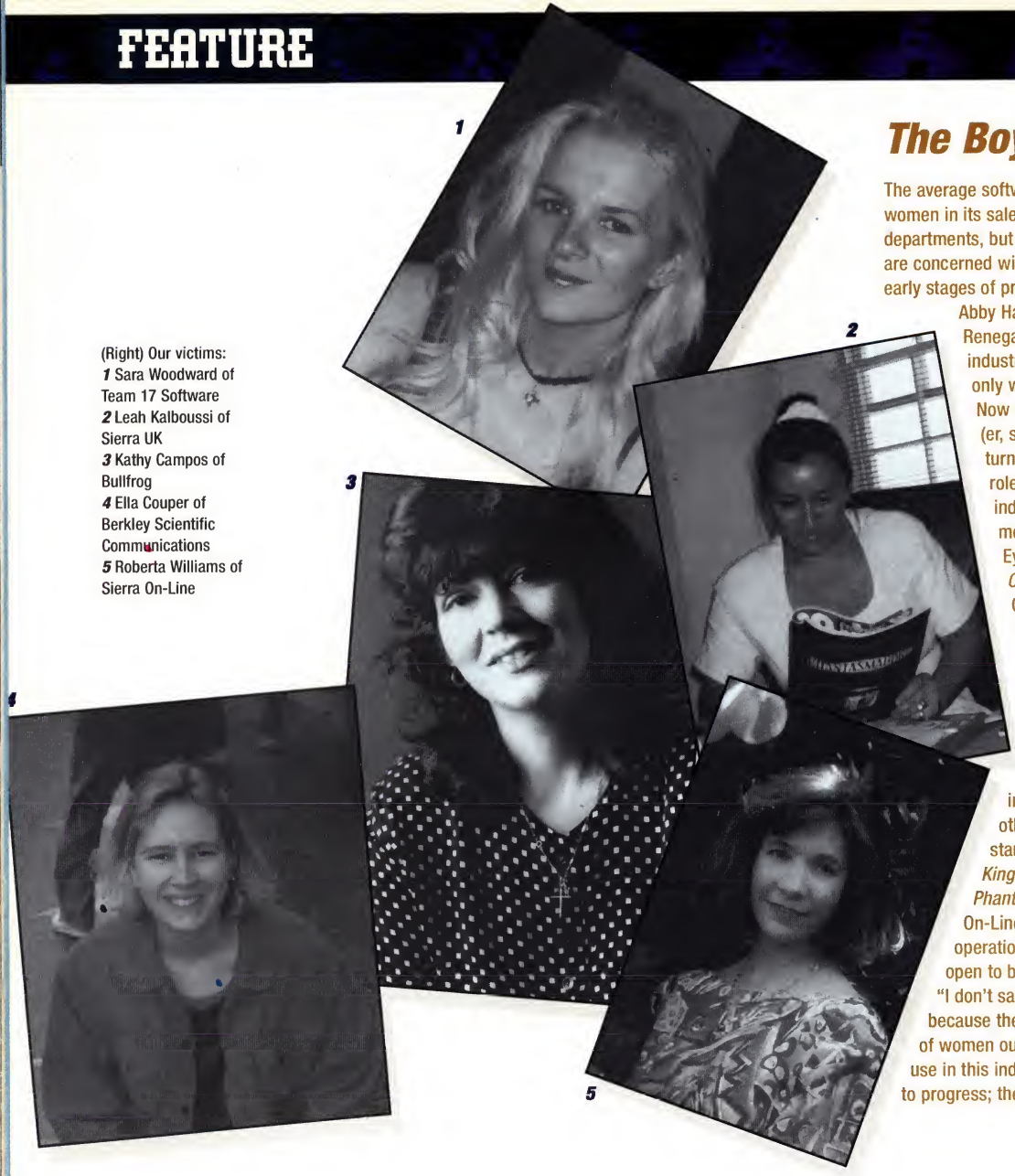
Let's talk about Sex...

Mention you play computer games and you're still classified a speccy twat, complete with greasy hair, crater-like complexion and *Iron Maiden* record collection. So is this why less than 10% of the female population admit to playing computer games? Or is it simply that girls have better things to do with their time? Jon Ewing slips into a long-haired wig and tries to separate fact from fiction. »



(Right) Our victims:
1 Sara Woodward of Team 17 Software
2 Leah Kalboussi of Sierra UK
3 Kathy Campos of Bullfrog
4 Ella Couper of Berkley Scientific Communications
5 Roberta Williams of Sierra On-Line

The Boys' Club

The average software publisher might have an even number of men and women in its sales force, administration, publicity and marketing departments, but all of those positions – invaluable as they may be – are concerned with the finished product. Women with an input in the early stages of production are rare, but things are changing.

Abby Hains started out as a part-time book keeper at Renegade three years ago. "When I first came into this industry," she recalls, "whenever I picked up the phone, the only women I ever spoke to were trying to sell something". Now a Development Co-ordinator with the Bitmap Brothers (er, sisters, siblings, whatever) Abby believes that the tide is turning. "These days there are more women in proactive roles, not just in telesales. When women have been in the industry long enough they'll get promoted and start moving up the ranks. It's already happening to an extent."

Eydie Laramore, one of the designers of *Dune II* and *Command & Conquer* for Westwood Studios in California, has climbed the career ladder using this method. She started out in the industry straight from high school in 1989, well aware that she was joining a boys' club. Her brother was a graphic artist at Westwood and she took a job as a receptionist because she needed the money.

"The whole scene used to be just hackers and their girlfriends," she remembers. "Everybody who was into hacking and modems around Las Vegas knew each other, so I knew the people from Westwood before I started working there." Roberta Williams, creator of the *King's Quest* series and more recently the seven-CD epic *Phantasmagoria*, is the second largest shareholder in Sierra On-Line. Leah Kalboussi, who runs Sierra's entire British operation, feels content that career opportunities are equally open to both sexes: "Gender is irrelevant," she remarks bluntly. "I don't say that because I'm an irate feminist, but simply because the same rules apply for men and women. There are a lot of women out there with a lot of qualities that can be put to good use in this industry. We can and do make a difference. We continue to progress; the question is, in which direction?"

« GAMES ARE MADE BY MEN FOR MEN. It's always been that way. Well, until fairly recently, anyway. And most PC games are about as politically correct as Bernard Manning's 'jokes'. Sex is a marketing tool exploited in all kinds of entertainment, not least in games. Just picture the average girl in a computer game: svelte hips, big lips and a skintight spacesuit from hell.

But things are beginning to change. The world of computer games is being slowly infiltrated by women. As PC games move into the mass market and the Internet becomes the hippest safe-sex pick-up joint of all time, computers are no longer exclusively toys for boys. Just wander down to your local arcade and watch the girls playing *Virtua Cop;* you'll see a chilling gleam in their eyes when they level their pistols at one of those reservoir dogs and pop a couple of caps into his chest. Blam! Blam! There's no show of tender feminine mercy here.

Leah Kalboussi at Sierra credits improved technology with the broadening appeal of games. "Looking back at some early products on the market, like Dave Braben's *Elite*, I have to say that from a female consumer's point of view I could never imagine myself wanting to play a game like that. But now that the PC has become an integral piece of home entertainment machinery it has opened up to a whole new multimedia user."

Ella Couper, a 26 year-old image consultant in the telecommunications industry, does not share her opinion. "I loved *Elite*!" she exclaims. "I can't remember how many hours I spent playing it on the BBC micro. Looking back it seems so crap, but I'll play pretty much anything. Flight sims are completely boring and I'm not really interested in RPGs or sports games, but I'll play anything else. *Dune II, Syndicate, Colonization,* LucasArts adventures – those are my favourites. *Doom* is cool, but it freaks me out. Every time I play it, it scares the hell out of me."

(Right) *Phantasmagoria* is the creation of Roberta Williams, founder and controlling shareholder in Sierra On-line. You play author Adrienne Delaney (ugh, a yucky girl) who explores a spooky old house to get some ideas for her new book.

(Left) With the characters of Mad Donna, Sister No Mercy and the phlegmatic Sweet Mo', comic-book artist Tom Carney has created a superb-looking cast for *Shockwaves Express*, by Invisible Cities Interactive. Sadly, these illustrations of exotic and dangerous women somewhat eclipse the game itself, a rather feeble collection of simplistic arcade-style games.

Sweet Mo' is © 1995 Tom Chaney

Comic cuts

There are obvious comparisons between comic books and computer games: the colourful pictures, exaggerated physiques, an emphasis on visual impact and simple good versus evil stories. Like games, comics are a boyish pastime and their images of girls are drawn accordingly.

Dating back to pre-war American strips like *Sheena, Queen Of The Jungle*, comic strip heroines have always been strong and muscular. Even though Sheena was invariably accompanied by her straight-laced boyfriend Bob, she didn't rely on him to protect her; instead, she was always the one who sorted out the evil white hunters.

Freudian psychiatrist Dr Frederic Wertham (who notoriously asserted that the relationship between Batman and Robin was "a wish dream of two homosexuals living together") believed that Wonder Woman – and by implication all other super-heroines – was a lesbian icon. He just didn't get it. What Dr Wertham failed to understand was that Wonder Woman was contrived by a team of straight men in a smoke-filled room whose comics were read almost exclusively by boys, just like any other. Wonder Woman never had any special appeal for girls, straight or gay – she was a pubescent male fantasy. Meanwhile, back in the '90s, *Shockwaves Express*, a new game from Invisible Cities, is attempting to exploit comic book style to sell CD-ROMs using characters designed by *Judge Dredd* artist Tom Carney. Like Jamie Hewlett's Tank Girl, modern heroines are unpredictable anarchists, but in the 50 years since Sheena one thing hasn't changed – sex. Carney's character Sweet Mo' is a gun-toting skate punk in wraparound shades, high heels and a clingfilm jumpsuit. She eats nerd boys for breakfast, but she is also their ultimate fantasy. "If you're gonna draw women," points out 27 year-old Carney, "there are certain things that, well, you've got to put in. On the other hand I think that a lot of the American magazines, particularly *X-Men* and a lot of those type of comics in general, the poses are almost pornographic."

But, like the world of games, comics lack a feminine alternative. Women artists and comic writers rarely break through into the mainstream. "When a woman draws comics," suggests Carney, "they won't put in the dynamism. It's all emotion and no action, slow and steady with the same number of frames on every page. There probably aren't very many women in the business, but it's hard to say – I work from home, so I really don't get out that much!"

Commercial breaks

But why are less than 10 per cent of games consumers women? Two reasons:

1 It's the age-old image problem

In the '80s the leading light of the PC world was Sierra On-Line's long-running character Leisure Suit Larry. Undisputed king of the boy nerds, he was a total sleazeball who represented all the sexual failures of the lonely PC user. To observe his vast dominion for yourself, you have only to take a look at your local, independent games emporium, squeezed into a grubby arcade and crammed full of teenage blokes with over-active glands. No self-respecting woman would want to join that scene.

2 Women don't know what games to buy

"It's just not something that's being sold to them," suggests Development Coordinator Abby Hains. "Women are never targeted by advertising and publicity campaigns, so they're much less likely to be in touch."

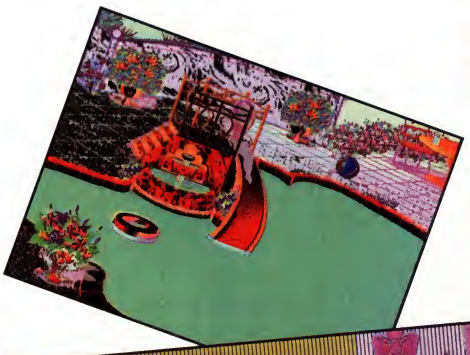
It's true enough – you'll never see an ad in *Cosmo* for the latest soccer sim. Die-hard *PC Zone* subscribers may have wet themselves in anticipation of Windows 95, but the average *Take A Break* reader would probably never have noticed the furore, except perhaps for the extensive television advertising – they are not usually exposed to the hype attached to a massive product launch. »

(Right) Jamie Hewlett's Tank Girl – mad, bad and dangerously sexy – has inspired countless comic book artists of the '90s and his influence is now spilling over into the games scene.

(Below left) The phrase 'sex comedy' didn't happen by accident – all the best jokes are about sex. In the game world, Larry Laffer's obsession with breasts and legs inspired Sierra's long-running series of sleazy comedy adventures at a time when PCs really were toys for boys.

Tank Girl is © 1995 Manga Publishing

His 'n' Her Games



(Right) Barbie is the doll that traditionally every little girl wants, but unfortunately the same can't be said for the Barbie game.

(Below) Japanese men have a very distorted image of the female body. Look at *Street Fighter II Turbo*, for instance. Weird. On second thought, let's not even get into it – it's too creepy.

Women have carved a niche throughout the media. Magazines, books, films, music, art; every form of communication has a feminine side – apart from games. Wouldn't more women be inclined to buy games if they knew that women were making them?

"No," says Westwood's Eydie Laramore, with a sigh. "I find the issue of 'games for women' a little trite. People say that women are more nurturing than men and blah, blah, blah... I can't conceive of that. Entertainment is entertainment. I think if you concentrate on an issue other than just fun or entertainment, then you're way off base. What I enjoy in games is pretty much the same as anyone else in the room – and of course everyone else in the room is a guy."

Team 17's Sarah Woodward also shrugs off the idea of games which are specifically for women. "I think that would be a bit crap," she says, simply. "Games should be made for men and women, not for men *or* women. I don't think that would work at all."

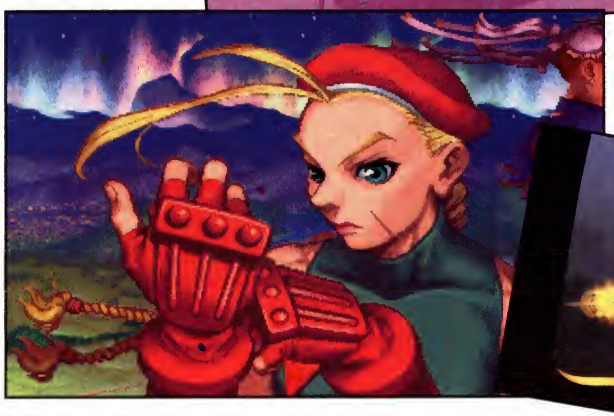
Bitmap Brother/Sister Abby Hains agrees. "I think that anyone who tries to make games for girls has got the wrong idea," she states. "Remember that Barbie game that Nintendo did a few years ago? Walking through a mall and throwing bra tops at people – I mean, what? That's not the kind of game girls are going to want. Girls are just as happy to play beat 'em ups as anyone, when the mood takes them."

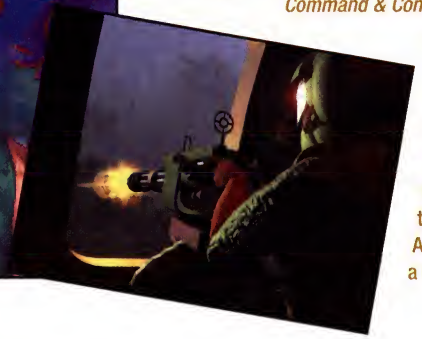
Bullfrog's senior spokesperson Cathy Campos thinks that games will have to change before women start to join in. "I hate to say this, but there are differences between men and women. I'm sure there are some women who are into John Wayne films, but I doubt there are very many, you know? Girls have different taste, games which are more thought-provoking and not just shoot, shoot, shoot. Boys get into games at a very young age but little girls are more sociable and gregarious. They want to be out meeting their friends and other boys. Girls are more mature in that sense."

"I've always really enjoyed playing computer games," responds Sarah Woodward. "I've had a computer in the house for years, going right back to the old tennis things, you know? I guess I got into it through my dad. If I get a new RPG or something I can sit down and play for hours."

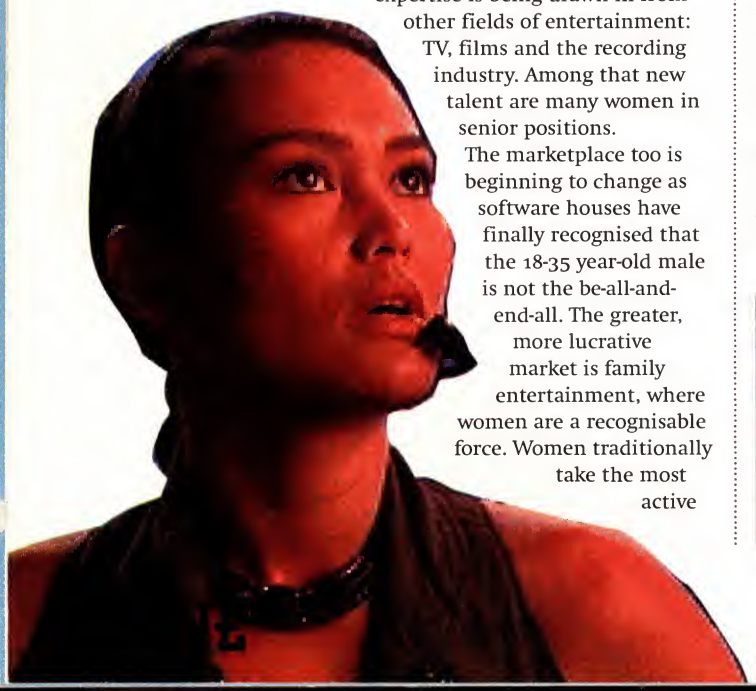
But what do you think of the violence and nudity in computer games? Back to Eydie Laramore: "Video games are supposedly violent because they're made for little boys. When we started doing *Command & Conquer* the joke was that I was doing it. But I wasn't making it for anyone in particular, just for people who like to play games."

"I don't take offense to certain roles of women portrayed in certain products," comments Sierra's Leah Kalboussi tentatively. "You have to look objectively at everything. I have the option to turn it off." "I'm not easily offended at all," says Sarah Woodward, a 23 year-old games tester from Team 17 in Yorkshire. "There should be fewer scantily clad women, I'd go along with that, but I think it's good to see more of the... you know, 'macho' women. Anyway, you have to be pretty thick-skinned. I mean, being here in a room full of blokes..." She's not wrong there.





(Below) Tia Carrera, Wayne's squeeze in *Wayne's World*, is now the ultimate PC babe in *The Daedalus Encounter*. The stereotyped image of women in games has changed forever... not.



« Times are a-changing

But Larry is going to have to hang up his leisure suit pretty soon as most of the women in the computer games industry are optimistic that their fortunes are changing. As CD-ROMs give way to 'interactive movies', more expertise is being drawn in from other fields of entertainment: TV, films and the recording industry. Among that new talent are many women in senior positions.

The marketplace too is beginning to change as software houses have finally recognised that the 18-35 year-old male is not the be-all-and-end-all. The greater, more lucrative market is family entertainment, where women are a recognisable force. Women traditionally take the most active role in their children's extra curricular education, so the field of edutainment software is destined to grow and grow.

Meanwhile, it's possible that we'll see testosterone-friendly software like cockpit simulations, golf games and soccer management epics becoming less and less popular. With women becoming increasingly financially independent, they will be invading the pitch in herds; the watchword for the late 1990s will be 'mass-market'.

For years the standards of gameplay and addictiveness men have been creating have been based on the kind of game we like to play. But we are a tiny fraction of the population: ABC1-disposable-income-white-collar-techno-literate blokes who have held the reins for years. Well, not for much longer. Neither feminism nor political correctness will be our downfall; instead, we will be the victims of market forces. The future promises harmless fun for all the family in the shape of CD-ROMs where Larry Laffer will be whipped into submission by an interactive Indiana Jones; men and women alike will thrill to the latest billion dollar Hollywood multimedia spectacle. But there is one thing both men and women should agree on, and that's the fact that games should be for everyone, regardless of sex.

Market forces

But it remains a fact that girls are not a market factor in the games industry and they are not likely to be for a few years yet, regardless of their income and increasing equality. Admit it, until the market accepts women more readily as an area it should be targeting, the likelihood of you coming home from work to find that your girlfriend has spent the gas money on *Sensible World Of Soccer* and she'd like you to be Liverpool is pretty remote. Nope, unfortunately it's still usually the case that your other half is about as likely to start playing *Sensi Soccer* as she is to suddenly express an interest in fly-fishing. **Z**

(Above) Many women's magazines aimed at the same age group as that of the (male) PC gamers cover topics such as sex, sex, and er... sex. Perhaps it's not surprising that less than 10 per cent of the game consumer market is female.

(Below left) Psygnosis has come up with its own version of *Tank Girl* in the outdated *She Queen Death Machine*. Nice title, crap game.

Game Over Boyos

After the male viewpoint it's the turn of Tessa Paine, who argues that contrary to popular male opinion, gaming sisters have actually been doing it for themselves in the computer world for quite a while...

If we eat beans don't *we* suffer from flatulence? If we get mad don't *we* feel like socking someone? If we're bored at work don't *we* play *Tetris*? The answer to all of the above, of course, is yes. Invariably though, the only time you'll see girls and game consoles mixing publicly is at the industry shows where blonde bombshells hand out promo leaflets. However, we'll soon be seeing more advertising directed specifically at girls that game on. Why? Because we have two major assets that the advertisers are highly interested in – our own PCs and our own credit cards.

Misguided political correctness might have designers banishing boobs big 'n' stable enough to rest your snakebite on from future beat 'em ups. Don't do that, I for one like being represented by an Amazonian with iron butt cheeks, it's all part of the escapism. But at the same time, being constantly presented with the 'Prince saves feeble Princess' scenario makes me vom. When I eventually get to her I don't want to grovel for her hand in marriage; I want to give her a violent shake and maybe even slap her about a bit for being such a stupid wuss.

Efforts have been made by the industry to produce games specifically for the female market. We just didn't seem to be interested. The Sisteren was unduly despondent with the bra tossing *Barbie* game – a rapier-like perception was obviously employed for that one. The boys at Nintendo must have been stumped that it didn't instantly set the female gaming world on fire. But hey, Walt Disney seems to have cracked it with *Beauty and The Beast*. One game for the girls and one for the boys. But surely it can't stop there, maybe Michael Barrymore would consider leading the campaign for *Billy and The Beast?* In fact there isn't any one particular type of game that is needed to make us part with our money, except that is, a good one. From the synapse-sizzling *Myst* to the adrenaline-packed *Doom II*, each to their own.

But let's not ponder too long over why it took the normally astute developers aeons to twig onto this untapped gold mine in the market. The good tide of change is being helpfully eased by those women brave enough to venture into these realms of maledom. Sorry geezers, but while you were huddled protectively around the PCs, as if they were cromagnon campfires with your Motorhead T-shirts draped over your sun-starved physiques, a few of us started taking an interest in this predominantly boysie area. Yes, we of the dance 'round your handbag' brigade used those miniature rucksacks to bash away in Dick Emery fashion, and become some of the industry's top games players, designers, graphic artists and programmers. And we didn't want to play with you anyway, ner ner ner ner ner.

Sweet Mo' is © 1995 Tom Chaney

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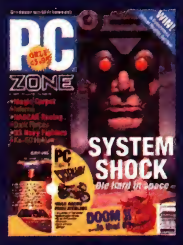

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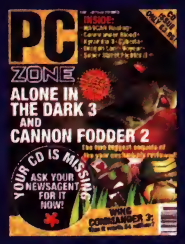

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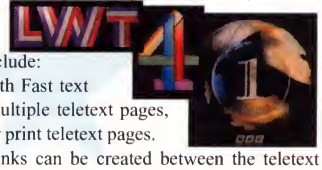

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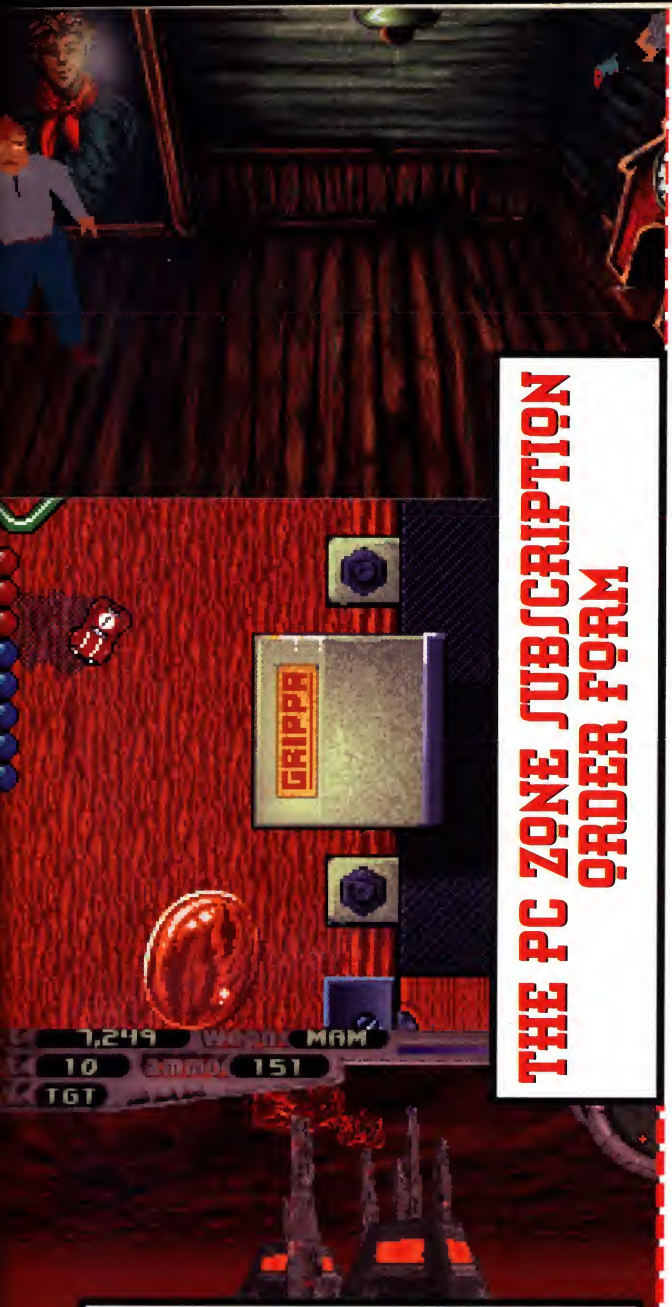

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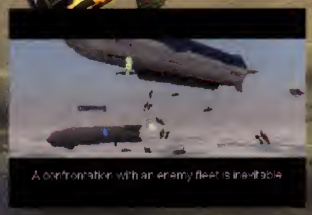

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ZONE ON-LINE

DOOM WATCH GOLD

This month: a gold version of the unbelievably popular Doom Watch, featuring Internet Dooming (no way!), a round-up of the current tournaments in operation (gosh!), a league round-up (wowsers!) and deeply nepotistic stories of the UberFragMeister killing people and such like (quelle surprise).

I-FRAG

After our aborted attempt to kill the entire staff at iD's Dallas HQ ('virtually', you understand), aborted due to pan-pacific noise problems and the quality of phone lines in this country, we roamed the entire communications world for a solution to the Transatlantic Conundrum. Fighting our way through a zoo of 'cyber' freaks (why is it anything with a modem attached to it has to be surrounded by a fleet of body-pierced dickwads smoking joints and poncing on about Timothy Leary? Huh?), we eventually found ourselves in sunny Chelmsford, oldest city in the world or somesuch, and inside the cellar of a renowned computer journalist. He wishes to remain anonymous and who can blame him, as we spent many mindless hours fragging Americans on the I-Frag system. Oh, and the best bit about it was that it was on his phone bill.

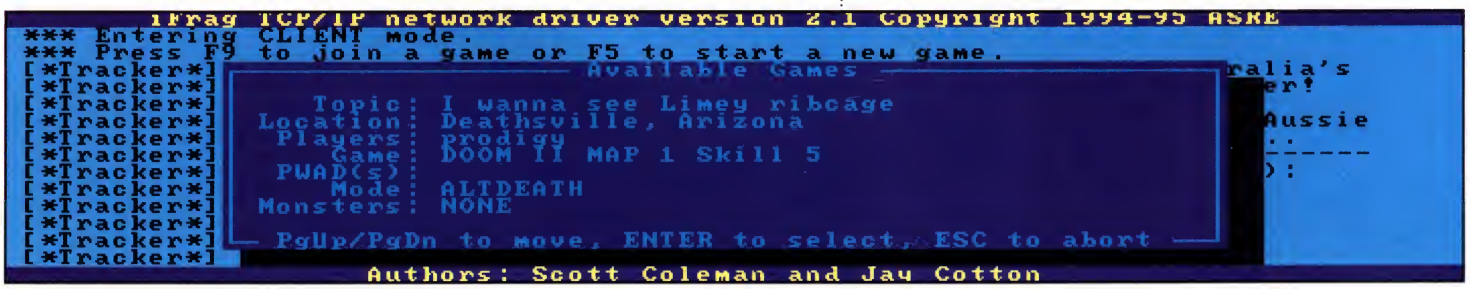
Internet Frag is a system whereby, via a series of utterly incomprehensible 'protocols', you can play *Doom* instantly with anyone in the entire world (except Germany, where it's banned, and you're only allowed to play nice games like *Virtual Pool* and *Solitaire* – true). The software is freely available and with it you connect to a mega-server in the US and spend hours confusing the yanks with idioms like 'not on your nelly' and 'you've been tangoed'. But, before you dial up Demon and demand the software, there are a couple of limitations.

Basically, you need a *direct* connection to the Internet. We can't tell you what that is, because we don't understand it ourselves, but we can say that it's completely different to the usual 'SLIP' connection you get from your provider. In the cellar in Chelmsford, we connected not with modems but with ethernet, via network cards. This means our connection was a) smooth, b) fast, and c) expensive. Very few people (bar providers and posh middle class oiks who drive Land Rovers) have a direct connection. Most people of the I-Frag system in the US or Europe use their college or university's direct link.

The I-Frag system is pretty industrial and un-user friendly but comes with most of the stuff we're used to. You can select wads, chat to people, uninvite or chuck people out of your game area, and most importantly, check the 'pings' of the other players. A ping is the time it takes a signal to reach the US server and bounce back, measured in milliseconds; a ping of under 200ms is excellent, 300-400 is jerky, and over 500 is unplayable. Unfortunately if you're calling from Europe and trying to play across the world your ping can be anything from 200-800ms, depending on the random quality of your connection. Most of the players are very precious about their pings. The following conversations are, as ever, verbatim:

UBERFRAG: Yo guys, who's the best?
DEFRAG: Guess.
UBERFRAG: You?
SCRUNCH: Hey, UberFrag, your ping's way too high.
UBERFRAG: My what?
SCRUNCH: I guess you'd better leave.
UBERFRAG: Do you know who you're talking to?
(DOS prompt as the UberFrag is unceremoniously uninvited.)

When you connect to the server, you scan for games. A little box pops up, giving you information of who's around. Early evening our time it's a ghost town (the Americans are getting their sleepy-sleeps), but hang around until late evening (10pm or later), and the action starts to hot up. Theoretically there can be an infinite number of games going on simultaneously but typically there's a maximum of 20. Most of the players use



(Below) I-Frag – here it is... *Doom* on the Internet.

DOOM UNLEASHED

Doom 2 1.9 and play esoteric wads with no BFGs on them. If the players in a game area are out to play a wad, it's not a problem – the wads are stored on the system. You just type /WADGET whatever and it downloads in the background, while I-Frag sets up the parameters for you.

After about two hours of insulting, bad pings and false starts, a game was finally arranged with DeFrag on his own wad, with reasonably low pings.

DEFRAG: This is my own wad.
UBERFRAG: Is it? Is it really?
DEFRAG: I designed it myself.
UBERFRAG: You any good?
DEFRAG: Yeah.
UBERFRAG: I bet.

The game starts. The players are synchronised and in we go. First impressions? Rubbish. The game is mondo jerky (very low Tidcup for people who understand), and even in low detail the UberFrag swings around like Helen Keller. DeFrag's wad is a small arena with a few sparse weapons in the centre (no BFG). After a few effortless frags, DeFrag disappears and then reappears with a BFG. Nasty. A cursory glance at the map reveals a huge secret room chocked to the hilt with plasma, megaspheres and ammo of all kinds. The Uber stocks up and then kills DeFrag repeatedly. The game ends on 15-01.

DEFRAG: How did you do that?
UBERFRAG: What?
DEFRAG: Find my secret room?
UBERFRAG: Er, it was on the map.
DEFRAG: It's not fair.
UBERFRAG: Are you crying?

All the I-Frag games we played were unbelievably jerky, almost unplayable, and compounded by the American's instance that we play *Deathmatch 2*. Boredom started setting in after a couple of hours until we met Monster, who had a very low ping indeed. We played a quick level 1 game which was pretty smooth, jerky in places, but playable. The score was 30-05. At last, a successful transatlantic connect! Romero – write your will, you're going down. Victory is mine, etc etc.

MONSTER: Thanks for the lesson.
UBERFRAG: Hey, any time.
MONSTER: Jeesh.
UBERFRAG: Where are you calling from?
MONSTER: Manchester.
UBERFRAG: England?
MONSTER: Yeah.
UBERFRAG: Ah.

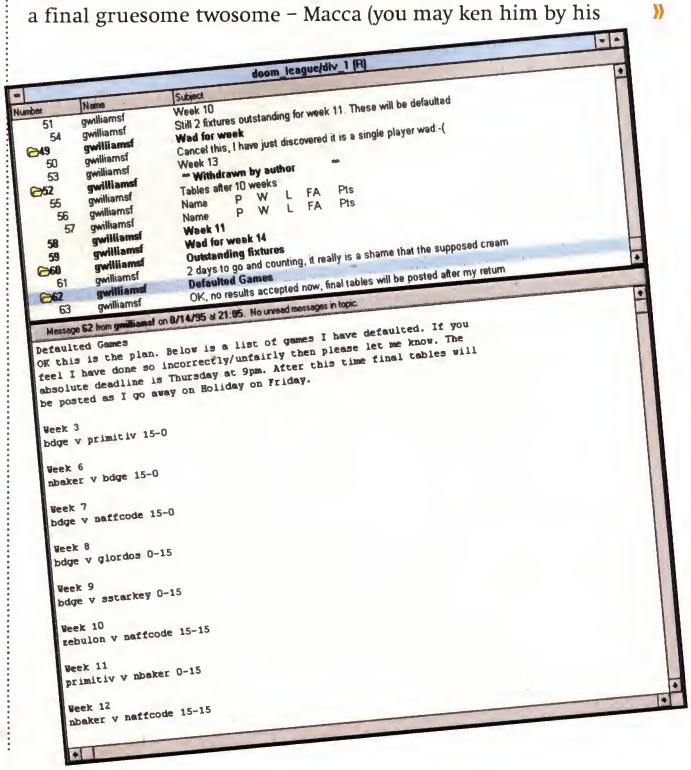
So, there you have it. Even with a massively expensive 68000 baud direct connection to the Internet, transatlantic *Doom* seems impossible. The UK will play the US – and win. Stay tuned, next month we'll try an ISDN line.

SEND YOUR WAD

If you've played a wad, found a utility, or nicked something good from the Internet, then why don't you drop us a line at:
Cool Files, PC Zone On-Line, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, or e-mail us at PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk.
Please, please, please do not e-mail any unsolicited UUencoded or binary mail to that address. Send a cover note first, explaining what you have, and we will arrange something.

CIX LEAGUE

Doom is the game. A cup is the prize. After two months the initial 32 players have been whittled, nay, chiselled down to a final gruesome twosome – Macca (you may ken him by his »



doom_league/div_1 (R)

Number	Name	Subject
51	gwilliamsf	Week 10
54	gwilliamsf	Still 2 fixtures outstanding for week 11. These will be defaulted
49	gwilliamsf	**Wad for week**
50	gwilliamsf	Cancel this, I have just discovered it is a single player wad :-(
53	gwilliamsf	Week 13
52	gwilliamsf	**** Withdrawn by author **
55	gwilliamsf	Tables after 10 weeks
56	gwilliamsf	Name P W L FA Pts
57	gwilliamsf	Name P W L FA Pts
58	gwilliamsf	**Week 11**
59	gwilliamsf	**Wad for week 14**
60	gwilliamsf	**Outstanding fixtures**
61	gwilliamsf	2 days to go and counting, it really is a shame that the supposed cream
62	gwilliamsf	**Defaulted Games**
63	gwilliamsf	OK, no results accepted now, final tables will be posted after my return

Message 62 from gwilliamsf on 8/14/95 at 21:05. No unread messages in topic.

Defaulted Games
OK this is the plan. Below is a list of games I have defaulted. If you feel I have done so incorrectly/unfairly then please let me know. The absolute deadline is Thursday at 9pm. After this time final tables will be posted as I go away on Holiday on Friday.

Week 3
bdge v primitiv 15-0

Week 6
nbaker v bdge 15-0

Week 7
bdge v naffcode 15-0

Week 8
bdge v glordos 0-15

Week 9
bdge v sstarkey 0-15

Week 10
zebulon v naffcode 15-15

Week 11
primitiv v nbaker 0-15

Week 12
nbaker v naffcode 15-15

DOOM TOTALITY

Update Watch Gold

Welcome, welcome, welcome to another special Update Watch. If you're concerned that your best pal has a newer version of *Flight Unlimited* than you, or the UK branch of your favourite software company isn't giving you the bug fixes and extra features you need, then look no further. You'll find all these excellent patches on this month's cover CD in the ONLINE\UPDATE directory; highlighted patches are essential upgrades.

Game	Company	Filename	Size	Notes
Dark Forces	US Gold	DFVFX1.EXE	44326	Forte released patch for VFX1 VR helmet
Doom	iD	12_19DRP.EXE	942076	Version 1.2 - 1.9
Dungeon Master 2	Interplay	DM2UP.EXE	296779	Corrects sound bugs
Fleet Defender Gold	MicroProse	FDGVID.ZIP	69820	Corrects Video For Windows bugs
Flight Unlimited	Looking Glass	FPATCH.EXE	870591	2 video fixes, joystick/mouse fixes
		FLIGHT2.EXE	828237	Matrox Millennium patch
		PAS16.EXE	17820	Pro Audio Spectrum 16 (PAS) patch
Genie's Curse	SSI	RELEASE.EXE	661939	Upgrade to 1.1
Hardball 4	Accolade	HB4FIX.ZIP	515484	Fixes 'playability and compatibility issues'
Harpoon 2		H2DPATCH.ZIP	1304266	Floppy version upgrade to v2.1.13
		H2DPATCH2.ZIP	184350	Corrects bug in June patch
Klik'n'Play	Maxis	KNDUSIIY.ZIP	801676	CD version to 1.1
MechWarrior 2	MicroProse	MW2VFX1.EXE	18273	Forte released patch for VFX1 VR helmet
NASCAR	Papyrus	NAS121.EXE	1049570	Corrects modem play
NBA Live'95	Electronic Arts	NBA-PA16.ZIP	534521	Sound support for PAS
Orion Conspiracy	Domark	DRIVESA.ZIP	39661	Beta patch for SVGA cards
Rise Of The Triads	US Gold	ROTT.ZIP	3741577	1.2 to 1.3 patch for registered version
		R13SWPT.ZIP	697663	1.2 to 1.3 patch for shareware version
ST:TNG A Final Unity	MicroProse	NXGENST.ZIP	62833	New installer for NexGen and OS/2 users
Tank Commander	Domark	TCV12.ZIP	539106	Various fixes
Virtual Pool	Interplay	VP0908.EXE	88399	Updated video drivers
X-COM II	MicroProse	TFTDV2.ZIP	929627	Update to v2.0

other name) and NBaker, formally known as Athelstan. The semifinals took place under abject secrecy, with each semifinalist mailed two custom wads, password zipped. The games were arranged for a certain time and only at the moment before the game commenced was the password given to the players – this was to make it all as fair as possible by eradicating any advantage knowing a level might give a competitor. The first wad SEMFINAL.WAD was a variation of *Doom 2*, level 1, with relocated weapons and start points, plus a few hidden extras. The second wad was a controversial choice – BOXING.WAD renamed as ROCKY.WAD, a bizarre level with a boxing ring and a host of monsters as the audience. The only weapons *seem* to be Beserk packs and chainsaws.

The first semifinal was played between Nbaker and Deej, the second between Macca and SStarkey.

GAMESNET

The combined *PC Zone*/Gamesnet tourney recently came to an end with Woof, a Hertfordshire-based laddie, winning his way through to the final and beyond. An unbelievable success, the tournament saw over 100 players taking part in over 200 games – simply the biggest 'virtual' tournament ever. Also implemented was a handicap system, whereby the best players were penalised for being good, giving newbies, no hopers, and crap people a chance at achieving something.

Over three weeks the players were honed down to nine finalists (among them Woof, Darkfury, Lambo, CenoBite, Viper and Nico) who played a bout of three-player games. The winners of the three games plus the highest losers (Woof, Lambo, CenoBite and Nico) went through to the semis. Unfortunately, Lambo had to go on holiday, so Darkfury took his place and came second to Woof in the resulting Armageddon. Those two then played a head-to-head final. Woof won 60-41 and was declared the champion. His prize? Why a visit to the *PC Zone* office of course, to play on our four-player ninja network (P133, P100, P90 and P75) plus some software goodies and the title of *PC Zone Doom Champion 1995*.

Just in case you're wondering, the UberFragMeister didn't take part in any of this. After all, it would have been grossly unfair for him to win a *PC Zone*-sponsored tourney.

COMPUSERVE LEAGUE

Running concurrently, and some might say not uncoincidentally, with the CIX league is the CIS or CompuServe British League. It's a four division affair, broken down into eight players per section. A season lasts four weeks and fixtures are drawn a week before each seven-week season starts. Each season is played on a different wad, custom designed by the League's referees Maddog and Flash. To encourage non CIS-users from entering, the British League also runs a small, free BBS where results, tables, wads, and mail are posted for competing players and wannabes.

Last season's winner was Grub, but other incredulously-named players are coming up (to wit: Mr Blobby, Damage, Z, Rubber Duck, Hacker, Rapier Ted, and Maddog himself). Macca, too, will be playing in the next season, but he has been placed in division two. Oh dear. Basically, anyone can play, but you'll have to hang on for a while and wait until the league has its major overhaul in a couple of weeks' time.

So, if you're over 16, have a DX266 or faster, and a registered copy of *Doom II* v1.9, then go ahead and e-mail steve@maddog1.demon.co.uk for more details. In the meantime, feel free to access the BBS on CompuServe: PC Zone 100142, 2152; CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk.

COOL FILES

The Cool Files world is a bit lugubrious this month. Very little activity, very little innovation, very little space. Here's with a quick round-up is the one and only... The Ponce.

KEWL

Heretic lovers out there who can't wait for *Hexen*, the even more RPG-esque sequel (covered in our *Blueprint* section this month), may want to whisk their time away in the arms of the new 7.50 version of HEEP (HEEP.ZIP, 879528), featuring, among other things, an ITA (Interactive Texture Alignment) feature which displays all three textures at once with X/Y offsets intact. Meanwhile, Doomers may be pleased to applaud the release of a new version of DeHacked, the sometimes hilarious, sometimes serious *Doom*-hacking utility. Version 3 (DHE30.ZIP 118117) fixes a few little bugs and gives you *Ultimate Doom* compatibility.

KOOL

For those Doomers who can't wait for *Quake* and have downloaded those cool screenshots, why not try out the hilarious Quake Loader program (QUAKEFE.ZIP 77078). This very funny DOS thing – surprisingly coded by an American – simulates a 'Quake is loading' sequence (much like *Doom*) and then pans quickly through some of the screenshots. It's more effective than it sounds, and many, many mindless minutes can be spent convincing your chums you have a Quake-beta. Har-de-har.

If anyone out there is still playing *Descent*, the question is – why? But if you are, you might like to try out Brett Russell's custom level, Lupis Outpost 4 (LUPIS4.ZIP 44818).

OVER TO YOU...

We've had a massive response from our hail for Cool Files worth downloading or having (mostly *Doom* levels, it has to be said), so we'll be having a special round-up next month.

INTERNATIONAL DOOM TOURNEY

Second to last day of October, Devil's Night – call it what you will, but write 30 October down in your diary as Hell Night – the day iD releases its much-mooted *Heretic*, which is, of course, the follow-up to *Hexen*. "And?" you might say. "What's this got to do with modem, *Doom*, and frags?" Well, you over-bearing little twat, I might reply, iD is promoting the launch of *Hexen* with an International *Doom* Tournament. After heats, 24 champs from the US, one from France, and a measly uno from the UK will be flown to the Microsoft Campus in Washington to play an all-singing, all-dying final. The winner, after playing bouts of *Doom II*, *Ultimate Doom*, *Heretic* and *Hexen*, will be declared World Deathmatch Champion 1995 and win lots of super prizes, courtesy of Microsoft (ie a copy of Windows 95 or something).

GT Interactive, iD's distributor in the UK, will be organising the UK bouts, but there's one small snag. GT plans to have the heats played in retail shops around the country. Fair enough, you might say. But, I will reply, shop-based tournies are notoriously for: a) having no provision for mouse players; b) not allowing you to change your keys; and c) encouraging loads of crappy Sega kids to take part, clogging up the place for the serious Doomers. As yet there are no firm details of the format, the system (network, modem, or serial), or the locations, but if you need more information phone GT Interactive on: 0171-258 3791.

GAMES SERVERS

Gamesnet
01222 362361
Cardiff (9 lines)

Gamesnet
0171-460 0515
London (16 lines)

The Games BBS
0181-561 3242
London (12 lines)

The Forest
01425 629629
Hampshire (12 lines)

Note: Although you can connect with normal comms software (8-N-1) you'll need a program called SIRDOOM.ZIP to play *Doom* multi-player.

VFX1 Headgear Virtual Reality

NO DOUBT YOU'VE ALL SEEN SOME New Age Cyber-bloke on TV tossing on about Virtual Reality (the same ones who think that the Internet is a substitute for a social life). While these people have dreams of being able to wander around virtual worlds, meeting virtual versions of their mates, and having virtual sex with everything that moves, current VR usually entails wearing a funny helmet and feeling a bit dizzy.

The average *PC Zone* reader spends quite a bit of time using a sort of Virtual Reality anyway. Any 3D first-person perspective game is designed to make you think that you're actually in the game itself, which is what makes them so addictive in the first place. While many games do a pretty good job of convincing you, the ways that you interact with your PC are nothing like anything that you'd do in real life, and if everyone had to consult a manual every time they wanted to look left or right there'd be carnage on the roads.

What's more, it's pretty difficult to believe you're Lieutenant Dirk Thrust of the US Air Force, shooting down Migs belonging to (insert stereotypical Middle Eastern madman of your choice) if you're staring at a poxy 14-inch monitor and your mum's shouting up the stairs that your tea's ready.

Dead 'ead

VR helmets are designed to convince you that you're much harder than you really are in three ways. Firstly, they move the image much closer to your eyes, which prevents you from seeing anything else. Secondly, because they can project a separate image to each eye, you'll be able to see in true 3D (provided you have the right software). Finally, the movement of the helmet is transmitted to the computer, which means that by moving your head you can look around the game's world.

The closest that most people will have come to a VR helmet is in arcades, and these have been around for a few years. But since PC games have become a lot more sophisticated manufacturers have started producing VR systems for home use, the latest being the VFX1 Headgear.

The VFX1 consists of a helmet, an interface card, and a funny little controller called a CyberPuck. Without mincing words (or mincing at all, for that matter), the VFX1 is loads better than anything else we've seen. The helmet itself is a hefty, very well-made, sexy black plastic job, with a hinged visor containing the goggles bit, and big padded built-in headphones. It's no lightweight, but it's comfy once it's on, the weight actually keeping it in place.

Bye bye reality

Connecting the whole thing up is straightforward enough, although you have to have a graphics card with a standard feature connector that attaches to the VFX1's interface card. Once you've done this, you install the driver, calibrate the helmet and then it's time to kiss a welcome goodbye to old, boring reality.

There is a CD included with the system that contains a load of game demos that support the VFX1, and where else to start but with everyone's ultimate fave, *Doom*? The first thing you are aware of when you don the helmet is a kind of blurred double vision, not unlike the aftermath of a Pro-Am Tequila speed drinking tournament. Fortunately, you don't need a fried breakfast, five gallons of water and a sickie from work to rectify this.

Unlike some other systems, the VFX1 has pretty decent binocular-type goggles which can be focused by turning each eyepiece. The eyepieces can also be moved further apart, or (if your parents were related in some way before they got married) moved closer together.

Once you've adjusted the eyepieces, the trick is to try not to focus on each screen, but to look ahead as normal (rather like that bit in *Wings Of The Apache* when Nicholas Cage has all those problems using the night visor, and he could have failed the course, but Tommy Lee Jones helps him and... oh all right, it's a shit film anyway). At any rate, once you've mastered this, both images merge into one, and you're off. Well ... sort of. Remember when I said

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Reality System

Bored of your humdrum, dreary life? Dave Mathleson's got a helmet that'll cheer you up.

that the VFX1 is much better than some other systems? That's because they're *completely* rubbish. While the image is pretty steady and all that, it's still not perfect, which makes the system hard to use for any length of time. Still, maybe I've got funny eyes or something.

But will it help me beat Macca?

Anyway, back to *Doom*. The game is controlled using a combination of the CyberPuck and head movement. Tilting the CyberPuck moves you forward and backward while you have to turn your head to rotate. This works fairly well, and the effect is definitely pretty realistic. The problem is that to turn right round, you have to move the headset round by the same amount, which sounds logical enough, except for the fact that the cable gets tangled up. What this means in practice is that after a while, to shoot a baddie who's a bit to the left, say, you have to turn right round the other way to unwind the cable. It doesn't need pointing out that this wouldn't give you much of an advantage against the likes of Macca.

While there are loads of games that support the VFX1, most of them don't give you true 3D graphics – they simply project one copy of what's on the monitor to each eye. The demo CD does contain a version of *Descent*, however, that works in stereo, enabling you to judge depth properly. The problem here is that the PC has to do twice as much work, so Jerk-O-Vision rears its ugly head even on a decent one.

Anyway, that really is quite enough whinging. The VFX1 is the kind of product that everyone wants to have a go on, and hog for hours. The best thing is that even if someone doesn't let anyone else have a turn, other people in the vicinity can amuse themselves by either a) laughing at the person wearing the helmet tottering about with their arms outstretched, or b) walking right up to the face of the wearer and shouting "Wanker!" while making the appropriate gestures.

Money to burn

The big one is deciding whether or not the system is worth the grand sum of six hundred quid. If you've got money to burn and you've already got a ninja PC, the VFX1 will certainly take your gaming into a new dimension and should give you lots of entertainment.

However, the less fortunate punter (and that no doubt includes just about all of us) would be infinitely better off spending the cash on a new CPU, some more RAM, or a 17-inch monitor. Z

Score

85

For those with loadsa money: **It's the best home VR system we've seen.**

Score

40

For those with sod all money: **It's a very expensive way of getting a headache.**

Price: £599 (excl VAT) **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Forte Technology
Tel: (USA) 716 427 8595 **Fax:** 716 292 6353

GATEWAY 2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Orchid NuSound

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Everyone's sick of having to fiddle about with their sound card to get it working, so we gave this proposed cure to the very sick Dave Mathieson.

SINCE THE SOUNDBLASTER 16 became the standard 16-bit sound card, lots of manufacturers have tried to better this basic design. Sound cards are made up of two basic modules – the digital audio circuitry and the tone generator. The first of these is used to play back and record digitised sound, which is done by 'sampling' the incoming waveform at regular intervals. The 'bit-ness' of the card defines the resolution that is used to store each sample, so the higher this figure, the better the sound quality.

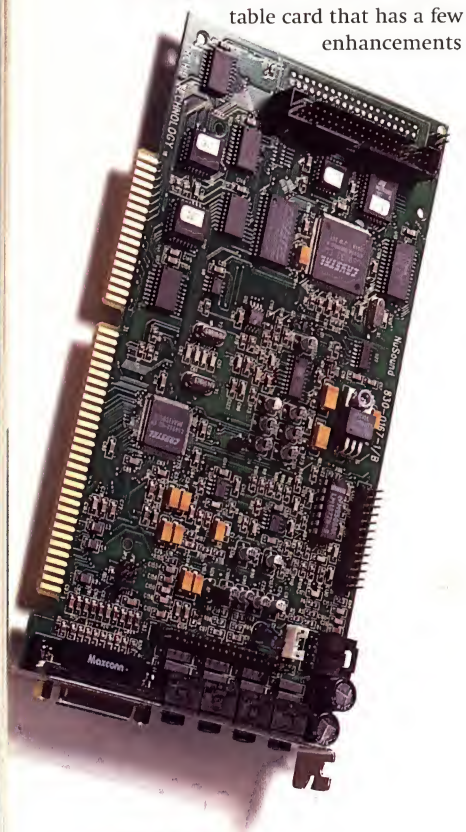
Since even the cheapest cards these days are 16-bit, most improvements have been in the tone generation side of things. Older sound cards use FM synthesis, which sounds decidedly cheesy, whereas newer models use wavetable technology, which uses far more realistic sounds based on samples of actual instruments.

Plug and Play

The NuSound from Orchid is a wavetable card that has a few enhancements over your basic SoundBlaster clone. The 1Mb of on-board ROM contains 190 instrument sounds, which means that games that support General MIDI have the required meatiness in the music department. However, as you're probably aware, this in itself is not exactly Innovation City. Where the NuSound really kicks in is in its support for Plug and Play. What this means is that, as long as you have a suitably equipped PC (as most new ones are), the device communicates with the PC, and between them they sort out exactly what hardware settings to use. In the case of the NuSound, this means 'bye bye IRQ and DMA hassles'.

Another plus is that the NuSound's Windows installation routine detects previous sound card installations and removes them. This didn't work quite as I hoped, but to be fair to Orchid, the PC that I tried it on had a lot of sound card-related rubbish hanging around in its system files.

While the NuSound also offers a 3D surround sound type thing, overall it isn't a radical departure from the norm in terms of sound generation. Where it does score, however, is in the ease of the installation, and with Plug and Play being supported by Windows 95, it shows the way forward. Z



Score

80

An innovative sound card that makes installation a breeze.

Price: £152 **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Orchid **Tel:** 01256 479898

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Ace Ma

Duncan Swain invites you round to his home cinema, complete with luscious usherettes and all the free ice cream and Kia Ora you can manage.

JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO THE FUTURE of MPEG looked shaky, with the announcement of new digital video disc formats from the likes of Philips and Sony on one side and Toshiba and Time Warner on the other. Now that Microsoft is to ship a software MPEG player with Windows 95, MPEG developers have heaved a sigh of relief.

Christmas time will see the release of multimedia PCs that will comply with the latest MPC3 regulations laid down by the Software Publishers Association to regulate the standards of multimedia PCs. One of these regulations states that a multimedia machine must have either a software or hardware MPEG player before it gets an official seal of approval.

All this goes to prove that MPEG as a format is far from dead, and if you do decide that you want to take advantage of the huge amount of VideoCDs available and get yourself equipped with an MPEG card, then you won't be wasting your money. There are several software versions of MPEG players but none are as efficient as a hardware solution; add to this the fact that the vast majority needs a high-end graphics card to produce anything near acceptable quality video playback and you will see that at the moment the best solution is to install a separate MPEG card.

Picture perfect

The Movie Master 24 from UK manufacturer Ace is a 16-bit ISA MPEG card that promises to produce quality 24-bit colour output of 16.8 million colours, the highest colour depth that can be currently produced. The card itself, upgraded from previous versions to work with PCI graphics cards, is simple to install: slot the card into a free 16-bit ISA slot, connect the feature connector between the MPEG card and your existing graphics card and then plug the cable from your monitor into the MPEG card instead of your graphics card. Then it's a question of installing the DOS and Windows software and off you go. Handy functions include the ability to freeze and grab frames and zoom in on a specific part of the picture.

Movie Master 24

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

The Ace card uses bi-cubic interpolation to produce a fully scaleable image that can be sized to a maximum of 1280x1024. This produced some of the highest quality MPEG playback we've seen so far, with very little colour banding or picture degradation. Interpolation works by grading between different colours, so instead of getting a line where two colours meet you get a smooth merging.

We did get some weird DOS text overlaying the picture at first but this disappeared quickly and was probably due to a graphics card compatibility problem with the feature connector rather than a fault of the card itself.

Ace supplies the card with three Video-CDs: a decent compilation of recent *Twilight Zone* stories, *Above The Law* (a sort of *You've Been Framed* with car crashes) and *Eyewitness*, a rather dull title about cats. All things considered, this card is good value for money with high-quality playback and useful software features. Z

Score

85

High quality playback from a fully featured MPEG card.

Price: £351 **Release Date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Ace Coin Equipment
Tel: 01952 29333

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

PC ZONE

READERS OFFER

ORDER LINE 01789 490 215

Duo Joystick Adaptor-the two player option

Save over 20% on the recommended retail price

By simply plugging this handy gadget into your joystick port, you can now allow 2 players at the same time on PC games without the hassle of having to fiddle about behind your computer.

Gone are the days of having to open up the machine for card installation to achieve the two player option. The Alfa Twin Joystick Adaptor comes with six feet of cable and plugs directly into the Joystick port eliminating the dangers of hardware conflict.

PC Zone are able to offer readers this great product at a special low price of £19.99 Usual price £25.99

To order with a credit card, call 01789 490 215 and quote ref BK06A. Cost includes VAT and postage and packing. If you wish to pay by cheque or postal order, complete the coupon below in BLOCK CAPITALS and send with your remittance to: **Dennis Direct, PO Box 2505, Alcester B50 4JU.**

Yes, I would like you to send me ..... adaptor(s) at £19.99 each.

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ADDRESS: .....

.....

POSTCODE: .....

DAYTIME TELEPHONE: .....

I enclose my cheque/postal order for: £ ..... made payable to ***DENNIS DIRECT***

I wish to pay by ☐ Visa ☐ Access ☐ American Express ☐ Delta ☐ Switch

Credit card details .....

Expiry date: ..... Signature: .....

Card issue number if using Switch: .....

Please send me a VAT receipt ☐

This information may be added to a mailing list. Please tick here if you would prefer not to receive details of special offers. ☐

20 -95 -09

The Trueplayers™, the Hackmasters™, a tips line that is manned on a Wednesday afternoon and a grumpy old git called The Boggit who answers all your letters... how much more tips support could we possibly give? *PC Zone* and the Troubleshooters – your caring sharing gaming helpers. (© Schmoozy Intros 1995)

TROUBLESHOOTER

Trueplayer™ Tips

Telephone

0171 917 7698

Ask for TruePlayer™ Tips from 2.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays only.

Just ring this number and ask for all the latest tips, cheats, hacks, cracks, solutions and spoils for all the latest games. This is not an answering machine. This is not a premium line number. A real person on the other end of the line will be happy to oblige you.

The Bottom Line

If you get into trouble or are a bit scared, ring us on TruePlayer Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1995. If you try to pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for alleged hardware or software damage caused by direct or indirect use of the HackMasters™ hacks and cracks. If the chances of damage were higher than 0.0000001 per cent, then we wouldn't be printing them. Make sure you follow the instructions and nothing can happen.

READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal we need you to prove that you have bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... *"I LOVE YOU"*. Ho ho. Have fun.

The Boggit's Mailbag

As ever, it's adventure games that are causing the most trouble this month, with *Simon The Sorcerer* and *King's Quest VI* causing particular problems.

Simon The Sorcerer

I've been trying to get into the dwarves' mine, but they're giving me a hard time and won't let me in. I'm pretty sure I need to give someone beer as that's all the little sods seem to be interested in. Try as I might I can't get any beer from the Inn. Got any ideas?

Bill Hartley, Blackpool

Small, argumentative, and only interested in beer – are you sure it's a dwarves' mine you're in, and not the PC Zone *pub? I do have an answer for you, but I warn you, once you've given them the beer, get out as soon as you can or they'll head-butt your knees.*

First you must collect some wax from the beehive outside the thatched cottage. Now go to the Inn and talk with the barman; you'll notice that he keeps ducking under the counter to examine something (don't ask what because I don't know, and as I'm a gentleman I won't hazard a guess in print). During one of his disappearing tricks use the wax on the beer barrel to block up the tap. The barman will now think the barrel is empty and ditch it outside for you to pick up.

(Below) Boggit's *Simon The Sorcerer* tips may be worth trying out down your local pub.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR

King's Quest VI

I've always liked the *King's Quest* series, but *KQ VI* has got me beat. There's an oyster on the Isle of Wonder which I know contains a pearl, but I can't get it at any price. No doubt you know all about oysters, so if you can show me how to get the pearl I might send you a dozen in way of payment.

Harry Longfield, Cardiff

The way to deal with this tricky mollusc is to send it to sleep. There's a boring book which you can get from the bookshop; when you've got it, read it to the oyster to make it sleepy. When it yawns, quickly use the hand icon on the shell to grab the pearl.

Sam And Max

One of the places I can go and visit is Snuckey's, and each time I go there the rabbit asks to go to the bathroom (does this bunny have a bladder problem or what?). I've tried speaking to the geek behind the counter, and I've bought everything in the store that seems able to be bought, but I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing there. No matter how many times I try going to the bathroom, it doesn't seem possible. Have you been to the bathroom?

Adrian Young, York

Well I haven't been for some time, but I do know what to do when I get there. It's like riding a bike, you never seem to forget – although it's only fair to warn you that one slip and you're in the shit!

The trick is not to wait until that daffy rabbit comes back inside the shop. Instead, you should go outside and waylay him before he returns the key. If you speak to him you'll find that you are able to keep the rasp which is attached to the keyring.

FX-Fighter Hints and Cheats Special

Part Two

Gabriel Knight

I'm a keen adventurer so I splashed out lots of hard cash on Sierra's *Gabriel Knight*. It's good but I find it far too confusing, and consequently I'm still on Day One. At present I'm looking for a policeman who is supposed to be a friend of mine but I can't find him. I think he's out on a case because he certainly ain't to be found at the Police Station. How do I make the crime scene icon appear on my map?

Dave Fulton, Bath

Have you been to Jackson Park? There are all kinds of entertainment going on there, including a jazz band and a mime artist. If you walk near the mime artist he will follow you, all the while taking the mickey out of the way you walk. Make the mime artist follow you to the motorbike cop and then you'll find that he'll forget all about you and start annoying the cop. When the cop chases after the white-faced fool you can listen to the cop's radio and hear a report telling you where the crime scene is.

Hand Of Fate

I'm trying to get to the Altar of Doubt (at least I think I am but I'm not sure whether I should – ho, ho, ho). I don't know why I'm laughing because I'm really pissed off with this game. The next person who tells me graphical adventures are fun is going to get a kick in the teeth! I have come to a gap which I can't cross. There is a rope which looks as if I could use it to swing over, but I can't reach it. I can't think of what I must do at this point.

Brian Forrest, Hackney

What you need is a big stick – and I've a good mind to give you a good bashing with it for writing and annoying me.

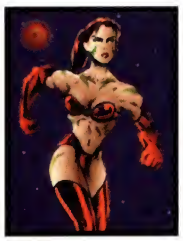
If you retrace your steps to the fountain beside the city gates you'll find that some plonker has stuffed a stick down the seahorse's throat. Get the stick and your problems are over – for about two minutes.

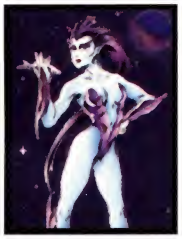
Loom

I bought *Loom* by LucasArts for my son because I'd read that it was very easy, but neither of us can finish it. We've got as far as the tornado which appears and destroys us. I have taken a note of the music which the twister uses, but when I play it back nothing happens. Well, nothing good, anyway.

Brian Camp, Southend

You don't want to make a twister, you want to 'unwind' it to make it disappear – in other words to 'reverse the twist'. Have a go at playing the notes backwards, and see what that does for you.





LAST MONTH WE GAVE you the moves for Ashraf, Cyben and Jake so that you could thrash your mates. Read on for Kiko, Magnon, Sheba, Siren and Venam.

Key legend

All moves are listed using the following letters and symbols:

P	means Punch
K	means Kick
B	means Back
F	means Forward
U	means Up
D	means Down
+	means and (ie B+P Back and Punch)
/	means Angle (ie B/D Hold Down and Back)
,	means Release First (ie F,F+P Forward, release, Forward and Punch)
->	means Roll Keypad (ie B -> D Roll Back to Down)
then	means Hold and Do (ie D then P Hold down then hit P)

Kiko

Punch Moves:

Two-handed Lunge	F + P
2-hit Combo	B , B + P
Toss	B + P (close)

Kick Moves:

Mid Kick	F + K
Crescent Kick	B + K
Drop Kick	B, F + K
Spin Kick	D + K
Sweep	D/B + K
Knee	F + K
Triple Kick	K , K
Backhand Spring Kick	K (when back to opponent)
Axe Kick	F , D + K
Jumping Side Kick	D -> D/F + K

Combo Moves:

2-hit Combo	F, F + K
2-hit Combo	K , F + K (close)
2-hit Combo	F , F , P
3-hit Combo	B , B + P

Rolling Moves:

Roll Clockwise	D/F + P

Projectile Throw:

Throwing Star	B , F + P

Magnon

Punch Moves:

Power Lift	F , F + P
Headbutt	F + P
Fists of Fury	B , F + P
Shove	U + P
Overhead Bash	D + P
Gut Punch	D then P
Flying Punch	U + F + P

Kick Moves:

Knee	F + K
Kick to Knee	D then K
Double Stomp	F , F + K
Bear Hug	B + K (must be close)
Low Kick	F/D + K
Sweep	B/D, B/D + K
Roll Kick	D -> F + P
Throw opponent when they are crouched	F , D + P (close)
Toss opponent when they are down	F , D + P (close)

Combo Moves:

Roll Kick Combo	D -> F + P , F + K

Rolling Moves:

Roll Clockwise	P then D/F (keep hitting D/F to keep rolling)
Roll Counter	B -> D

Projectile Throw:

Fire Breath	B , F + K

Sheba

Punch Moves:

Heavy Slash	B , P (fast)
2-handed Uppercut	U + P
Scratch	B , F + P
Torso Hit	F + P
Throw	F , B , P (close)

Kick Moves:

Leg Throw	F , F , K (close)
Flip Away	B + K

Crouching Moves:

Crouch	D
Foot Charge	F , B + K
Face Rake	F + K

Combo Moves:

4-hit Combo	F , B , P

Rolling Moves:

Roll Clockwise	P then D/F
Roll Counter Clockwise	P then D/B

Siren

Punch Moves:

Throw	F + P (close)
Lift	U + P (close)
Throw	/b> = F + B -> F (close)

Kick Moves:

Groin Kick	F + K
Flip Kick	F , F + K

Venam

Punch Moves:

Swipe	F , P (fast)
Throw	F , D + P
Uppercut	B , P

Kick Moves:

Let Throw	B , F + K (close)
Jumping Kick	U + K
Leg Kick	B , K

Combo Moves:

Spinning Combo	F , B + P , P , P
2-hit Combo	F + P , K
2-hit Combo	F , F + P
2-hit Combo	F + K

Projectile Throw:

Acid Spit	B , F + P

And finally – moving the camera!

You can move the camera yourself by hitting the Home key during a match. You can then use the arrow keys to move the camera and the PgUP and PgDn to zoom.

»

Trekkies were delighted with last month's Part One and, as we're totally predictable, here's the second and final installment of our ultimate player's guide.

Star Trek The Next Generation "A Final Unity"

Part Two

THE STORY SO FAR... AN AGEING Shakespearean actor who has fallen upon bad times, has taken up with a glamourous granny from the *Dynasty* TV series. This unlikely duo has been joined by a pasty-faced computer nerd called Data, plus a Stevie Wonder impressionist who wears an air filter over his eyes. All together they have decided to travel to far off galaxies, seeking to bring peace to troublesome locals – whether they like it or not. Got that? Okay, now read on...

Scroll World – Frigis

220 Riker talks to Laraq
221 "We're looking for information..."
222 "It's only been a thousand..."
223 "What are these pyramids?"
224 Talk with Geordi
225 Enter pyramid at front of screen
226 Riker talks with Stamblyr
227 "Can you help us find..."
228 "That's a generous offer..." *(Note name of song!)*
229 Geordi uses tricorder on large instrument in room
230 Riker talks with Stamblyr again
231 "What is this place?"
232 "Why do you call yourselves The Chanters?"
233 "Your instrument seems broken..."
234 "Why is there one hole..."
235 "Lovely temple..."
236 Exit temple
237 Go to pyramid in background
238 Riker talks to Madia
239 "Can you help us find..."
240 "Why do you call yourselves..."
241 "What is this place?"
242 "Why don't you still have..."
243 "Why do you have a forcefield..."
244 "Lovely temple..."
245 Geordi looks at forcefield
246 Exit temple
247 Walk to desert (exit screen right)
248 Walk to pyramid
249 Riker talks with Nachyl
250 "Can you help us find..."
251 "Why is your group called The Seekers?"
252 "What is this place?"
253 "Why is this normally..."
254 "When did this start being..."
255 "Isn't it possible..."
256 "What is The Gatekeeper like?"
257 "Lovely temple..."
258 Geordi uses tricorder on vault
259 Geordi looks at door and sculpture
260 Walk to door at end of path
261 Walk to door
262 Answer The Gatekeeper's questions *(NB The name of The Chanters' song is 'The Futility of Wisdom', therefore all knowledge is irrelevant and one must answer, "I don't know" or "I have no idea" or something similar to the questions)*
263 Walk through open door
264 Geordi looks at statis field
265 Geordi looks at sign
266 Geordi looks at control panel
267 Geordi uses tricorder on sign
268 Geordi uses tricorder on control panel
269 Exit room
270 Walk to Hall of Triumph
271 Walk to doorway
272 Riker talks to Data
273 Walk to landing area
274 Riker talks to Laraq
275 Walk to desert
276 Geordi walks to door
277 Geordi uses tricorder on sign
278 Geordi uses tricorder on control panel
279 Talk to Aelont
280 "Are you feeling..."
281 "How could the Lawgiver..."
282 "Can you help us..."
283 "What is this place..."
284 Exit screen
285 Walk to Hall of Triumph
286 Walk to vault
287 Use thermacode key on vault
288 Take three items as requested by Aelont:
Golden Ring
Device
Staff with bulbous head
289 Exit
290 Walk to doorway
291 Walk to landing area
292 Walk to first pyramid in foreground
293 Geordi puts device on instrument
294 Geordi puts golden ring in hole on wall behind singing plants
295 Exit temple
296 Walk to second pyramid in background
297 Riker gives staff to Madia
298 "What is behind..."
299 Geordi uses tricorder on device
300 Use the Orchestrion called 'Travelling Music' (two prongs)
301 Look at device on left of screen
302 Look at touchpad on right of screen
303 Use the Orchestrion called 'Watch your Step' (four prongs)
304 Use any character to walk along new path to collect Orchestrion on front left (three prongs)
305 Walk down one square and across one
306 Use newly collected Orchestrion (three prongs)
307 Get Orchestrion from front right (prong in cover)
304 Walk down one square and across one
305 Use new Orchestrion

(Left) Tooj-ta vok TAKH.

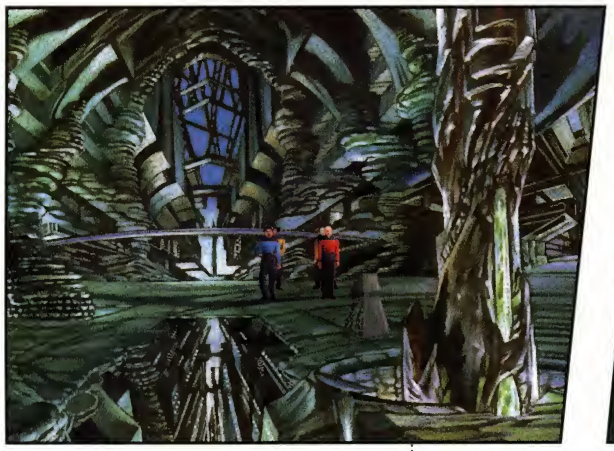
306 Walk up three squares to end, and across one
307 Use original Orchestrion with four prongs
308 Collect Orchestrion from far left side
309 Walk right one square
310 Play Orchestrion with a single covered prong
311 Walk right one, and down one square
312 Use Orchestrion with two covered prongs
313 Get last remaining Orchestrion from far right
314 Walk down one and across one square
315 Use Orchestrion with single covered prongs
316 Walk up one and across one square
317 Use Orchestrion with four prongs
318 Walk left one square
319 Use Orchestrion with single prong in raised cup (last collected Orchestrion)
320 Walk up one square
321 Use Orchestrion with covered prong
322 Walk right one square
323 Look at niche in door
324 Geordi uses tricorder on niche in door
325 Geordi uses tricorder on talismans given by Aelont
326 Put matching talisman in niche in door
327 Look at manuscript
328 Get manuscript
329 "I should like to consider..."
330 Wait and then watch Romulan invasion movie
331 Talk with Riker
323 Contact Starfleet on Comms
333 Wait

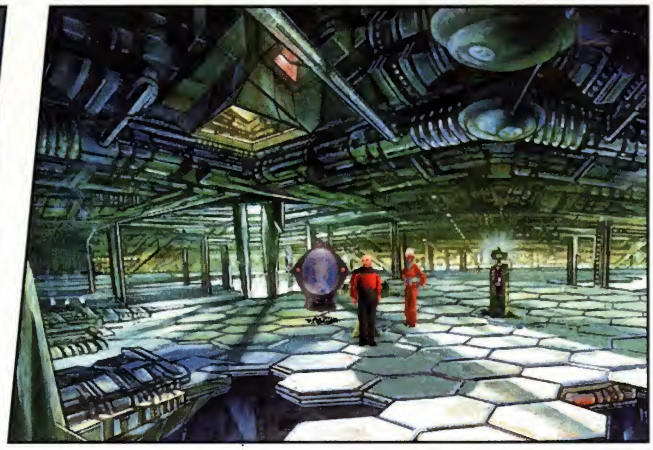
Romulan invasion event

334 Contact Commander Chan from Comms
335 "We're on our way..."
336 "Prepare to engage, Mr Worf..."
337 "Then it appears..."
338 Contact Commander Chan from Comms, then engage Romulan ships that attack
339 "Intercept the target..."
340 At this point the wimps may choose to delegate Tactics to Worf
341 Return to bridge and contact Commander Chan from Comms
342 "Why did your ships..."
343 "Mr Data..."
344 Return to bridge
345 Contact Commander Chan
346 "We'd like to replenish..."
347 Go to the Balis system
348 "What exactly did you learn..."
349 "Can you tell us anything..."
349 "I trust that you are handling..."
350 Talk with Commander Chan on Comms
351 Put Starfleet signal on screen
352 "Lay in course for Shonoisho Epsilon 6..."
353 Destroy the Romulan Warbird
354 Go to the transporter room
355 Away team: Picard, Worf, Data, Troi
356 Picard talks to Laraq
357 "The Ancient Chodak have suddenly..."
358 "What do you know about Chodak technology?"
359 Evasive manoeuvres
360 Destroy Romulan Warbird
361 Set course for Horst III
362 Set course for the Yajj system
363 Warp away from battle
364 Set course for Horst III
365 Go to transporter room
366 Away team: Picard, Troi, Data, LaForge
Equipment: Phaser, Tricorder, Isoliner Rod, Rod Programmer
367 Talk to LaForge
368 Look at platform
369 Look at rubble
370 Use tricorder on rubble
371 Use phaser on high setting (yellow) on rubble twice
372 Walk to open passageway
373 Walk to rear of site
374 Data uses tricorder on instrument
375 Data uses tricorder on instrument mounting
376 Walk right
377 Geordi uses screen
378 Use Isoliner Rod on aperture
379 Use rod programmer on rod
390 Use tricorder on screens
391 Get rod
392 Walk to access shaft
393 Hail the ship and beam up
394 Wait for information from Data
395 Set course for Allanor, warp 5
396 Wait for Data's report on the planet
397 Go to the transporter room
398 Away team: Picard, LaForge, Data, Calstrom
Equipment: Phaser, Tricorder, Isoliner Rod, Rod Programmer, Data Crystal

Allanor – admin world of the Chodak empire

399 Look at ashes
400 Data uses tricorder on ashes
401 Data uses tricorder on schedule at back of hall
402 Look at grill at bottom right
403 Picard walks to grill
404 Calstrom walks to drone in centre of room
405 Calstrom uses tricorder on drone
406 Calstrom uses tricorder on foreign object
407 Picard uses phaser on alloy seals on grill at highest settings. There are three seals
408 Picard walks to gap left by fallen grill. Do NOT walk through
409 Calstrom removes logic inhibitor from drone; "I think your..."
410 Run like hell!!! Send Picard through opening, the others will follow
411 Geordi uses display panels
412 Use isoliner rod on port
413 Use rod programmer on rod
414 Select 'System Log'
415 'Initialise System'
416 'Active Facility'
417 'Access Main Database'
418 'Dispatch Repair Unit'
419 Take rod
420 Walk to passage
421 Walk to door at end of passage after drones leave
422 Use tricorder on door
423 Place logic inhibitor on door circuits
424 Deactivate arriving drone with tricorder
425 Remove logic inhibitor from door circuits and walk through door
426 Look at drone
427 Look at control panel
428 Geordi uses isoliner rod on control panel port »





(Right) Kha-di-BAKH.

« **429** Use rod programmer on rod
430 Turn power on
431 Turn station on-line
432 Exit panel
433 Wait for drone to leave
434 Activate panel again
435 Turn power off
436 Exit panel
437 Wait for all the drones to drain the power (the green lights will go out except for one)
438 Activate panel again
439 Turn system off-line, then exit panel
440 Use phaser on capacitor
441 Follow aliens
442 Picard talks to far right alien
443 "We are on an archaeological..."
444 "We are on a peaceful..."
445 "We have not found..."
446 "We have expertise..."
447 "No need to trouble..."
448 "We can look..."
449 Walk right to passage
450 Look at alien device on ceiling
451 Geordi uses tricorder on alien device on ceiling
453 Geordi uses tricorder on control panel
454 Geordi uses panel
455 Select button 1 on top and button 3 on left side
456 Use timer
457 Exit panel
458 Walk to middle of room to join the others
459 Talk to Picard
460 Walk to archways at back of room
461 Walk right
462 Data uses tricorder on lens and lights
463 Use phaser on light sensor
464 Data uses tricorder on light sensors
465 Tune phaser to new frequency
467 Use phaser on three lights and run through door under lens
468 Talk to Geordi
469 Walk down the stairs
470 Walk to obelisk
471 Data uses tricorder on obelisk
471 Geordi uses pedestal
473 Use isoliner rod on port
474 Use programmer on rod
475 Use tricorder to record Starmap immediately!
(This is important – if you fail to get the map it means that the crew will only find a black hole instead of the Unity Device; you cannot complete the game without this chart)
476 Look at pedestal again
477 Look at all information
478 Walk north and watch Chodak leave
479 Talk to Picard
480 Switch to Data and walk up the stairs
481 Data shoots light sensors with phaser; shoot lights above door and to the immediate left
482 Run to the left
483 Walk to hall
484 Use transporter panel
485 Button 3 on top, and button 2 left then use timer
486 Walk under transporter
487 Walk to left of door
488 Walk to charging station
489 Walk to passage
490 Walk to chamber
491 Walk to walkway
492 Walk to left and beam out quickly
493 "You're right..."
494 Make course for the Unity Device
495 Talk with Starfleet

The Unity Device

496 'Evasive Manoeuvres'
497 Take shuttle to surface of device
498 Walk to interior bay
499 Use tricorder on fluid
500 Data uses tricorder on alien device
502 Talk with Worf
503 Worf walks to transporter
504 Worf walks onto pad
505 All remaining team walk onto pad
506 Picard walks left
507 "Who are you?"
508 Walk left
509 Talk with Pentara and Brodnack
510 Walk to shuttle
511 "Agreed..."
512 Walk to far door
513 "Yes, let's get on with it..."
514 Talk with Admiral Broadnack
515 Look at table
516 Look at table again
517 Look at button
518 Exit table
519 Talk with Pentara
520 "There must be another way..."
521 Talk with Pentara
522 "It is time we started to work together..."
523 Talk with Broadnack
524 "There must be another way..."
525 "With a little..."
526 "You could lose, Broadnack..."
527 Look at table again
528 Place disc half on left receptacle on table
529 Press button
530 Press button again on second turn
531 Press button again for third turn
532 "Even if we..."
533 "No. Everyone, including..."
534 Use table
535 Remove half disc
536 Exit table
537 Walk to field generator
538 Look at field generator
539 Look at field emitter
540 Look at common terminal
541 Look at lower air gap
542 Look at field coil
543 Look at upper air gap
544 Place two halves of the ring together
545 Place disc in lower air gap
546 Exit field generator
547 Look at field generator
548 Put half rings together to create two whole rings
549 Use discs in upper air gap
550 Exit generator
551 Walk right
552 Use artefact three times to bring everybody over gap
553 Pick up symbol
554 Walk right, through door
555 Walk to the door at front of the screen
556 Use symbol on door
557 Walk through open door
558 Look at stasis chamber
559 Look at panel
560 Look at statis chamber
561 Use panel
562 "The Unity Device should be used for the good of all"
563 Walk right and then right again to exit screen
564 Walk to tower
565 Talk with Guardian
566 Use panel
567 Deactivate panel
568 Choose 'YES'
569 End game Z

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Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

BUYERS' GUIDE

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games
(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

688 Attack Sub
(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Air Bucks v1.2
(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
A potentially interesting variation on a theme, which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Krondor
(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93
(75) Domark – Sport £29.99
An undoubtedly 'serious' management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1
(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99
Falls between two stools – and we're being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection
(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99
Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy, Fantasy World Dizzy, Kwik Snack, Dizzy Prince Of Yolkfolk, Magicland Dizzy.*
A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom
(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,
Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod
(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £30.99 (only available in a compilation)
'Nifty scrolling, great gameplay' is our first remark on playing *Robocod*, closely followed by, 'Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?'

Premier Manager
(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99
Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame
(89: Recommended) Brøderbund – Platform Game £39.99
We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protostar
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/ Trading £39.99
A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles
(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.

War In The Gulf
(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend
(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlemania
(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to 'serious' role-players than your average gamer.

Blue Force
(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows
(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback
(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's *Prince Of Persia* in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge
(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two-player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle
(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for our roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

MiG-29: Fulcrum
(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly
(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Napoleonics
(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium (deleted) £34.99
Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

Open Golf
(50) Ocean – Sport (deleted)
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams
(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99
As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

Prehistorik 2
(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99
This is a very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rags To Riches
(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantom
(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too easy and short to justify the price.

Sensible Soccer
(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends
(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99
You'll like at least two out of three.

The Immortal
(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
At least four Sunday afternoons' play, we reckon.

Tornado
(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions (and plenty of 'em) combine to make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)
(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99
Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Our score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe
(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel
(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)
(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
A shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)
(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II
(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom
(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats
(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat
(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Unfortunately a good idea that doesn't translate into a good game.

Hardball
(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit
(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving 'story-driven' tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the 'soft' story.

Lands Of Lore
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what *Eye Of The Beholder III* could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper
(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Simulation £14.99
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(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

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(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.

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(75) MicroProse – Flight Sim £19.99
An excellent add-on for *Falcon 3.0* fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

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(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
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(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
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(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99
Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)
(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
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(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99
A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team
(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99
In storyboard form this probably looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer
(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99
At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99
An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patrician
(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99
Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap? Look no further.

Wing Commander Academy
(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
This is only really worthwhile for *Wing Commander* combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess
(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Stalemate for the *Battle Chess* series.

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(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
As you can see by our score, we reckon this is a criminal waste of a CD.

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(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
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Cover Girl Strip Poker
(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
As if it's not bad enough that this is an appallingly bad poker game, it's also a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0
(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Simulation £35.00
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Gear Works
(62) The Software Business – Puzzle Game £19.99
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(Left) *X-Wing:* groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

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(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.
T2
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99
Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.
The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)
(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game. One can only turn to Origin and ask, 'Why?'
Troddlers
(79) SCI – Puzzle Game £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.
Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.
Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.
Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.
Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.
Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to *Ultima*.
Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99,
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.
Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.
Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.
Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.
Gobliiins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.
Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.
Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. We know, give it a job with *PC Zone*.
Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.
Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.
Magic Candle I
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.
NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.
Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.
Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.
Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
It's reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.
Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC IS hindered unless you have a gamepad.
Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Simulator £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.
V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
It's still the best computer wargame system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.
When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.
20th Century Almanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.
Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.
Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.
Alien Breed
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.
Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.
Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting; the gameplay, however, isn't.
Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.
IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.
Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.
Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, this is an atmospheric and addictive game.
Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.
Links Championship Course: Innisbrook
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.
Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.
Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.
Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving Game £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.
Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.
Night Shift
(70) Kixx – Puzzle Game £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.
Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.
Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.
Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!
Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.
Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.
Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.
Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is 'fascinating' but it isn't the best flight sim or adventure game.
Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
One look at the poor score should be enough to tell you what we think of the game. Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?
The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and longterm playability.
The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So come on then, what are you waiting for?!
World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.
World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
An innovative mix of naval strategy and action, though unfortunately the gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations.

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.
Alone In The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
Absolutely brilliant! What the PC was made for.
Alone in the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.
B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy *B-Wing* or, er, something else.
Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics.
Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.
Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.
Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. For very hardened and grizzled role-players only.
Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.
Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.
Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.
Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.
Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.
Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very 'magic' at all.
Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.
Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.
Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.
Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best 'fun' simulation that MicroProse has produced.
The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.
The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.
VGA Planets
(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

»

(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer:* at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

« **Championship Manager '94**
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).
Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.
Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.
Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?
Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.
Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.
Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.
Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilization*.
Hand Of Fate
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.
Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.
Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.
Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.
Lilil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.
Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.
Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.
Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.
Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but dull battle scenes.
The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.
Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.
Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.
D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.
Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.
Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best. Need we say more?
Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.
Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.
Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.
Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).
Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.
Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.
Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.
Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.
Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.
Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.
Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.
The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.
The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.
Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.
Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.
Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.
Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.
Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!
Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is *the* strategy game of the year.
Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.
Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.
CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.
Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.
D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that *Windows* users have ever played.
Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.
Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.
Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.
In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!
Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.
Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.
Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.
Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.
NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.
Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.
Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.
Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!
The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.
The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.
Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'alright'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.
Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.
Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.
Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.
Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!
Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.
Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.
F1
(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.
Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.
Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.
Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*.'
Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.
Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.
Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.
Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got 'real' and produced a playable and accessible RPG.
Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.
RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
A stunning program which will be hard to beat.
Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.
Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.
Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.
TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.
UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.
Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
Simply one of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.

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MUSIC

ZWELIGHT ZONE by CAPACALA - 4th at Assembly 95 - our favourite. Wonderful fish tank
STARS: WONDERS OF THE WORLD by NOON (2) - Winning demo at Assembly 95
SBIGUS GRIND - Awesome new MOD player that displays people dancing in perfect time to the music
DX PROJECT by REALTECH (2) - 3rd place demo at Assembly 95. Supports Gravis and SB
CERES COMPOSER - Record/playback MIDI files
CERES STUDIO SOUND - Windows 16 track
WAV multitrack sample - professional product
HEARTQUAKE (2) - Super megademo by Iguana
PERFECT BALANCE - by Wild Style - excellent new demo
SHRINE by Guru Magic - brilliant new rave demo
SCREAMTRACKER 3 - MOD music composer
S3M MODULES (2) - Music for Screamtracker
NOTEWORTHY FOR WINDOWS - Musical score editor
DUNGEONDWELLERS - Best demo of 95
MUSIC EASE - Musical score editor etc. Can print out & import/export MIDI files, input from keyboard or MIDI.
WINJAMMER 2.3 - Full features Windows MIDI sequencer.
GOLDWAVE - Windows sound editor, recorder & player
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COMPACT DISC MASTER - DOS audio player
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MUZIKA - Windows - MIDI music score editor
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TREKVOCS - Star Trek VOC files
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MOD FILES (3) - Loads of MOD files
MIDI FILES (5) - Loads of MIDI files
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WINDOWS WAV FILES - Mainly sound effects
BLASTER MASTER 6 - Edit sound files

EDUCATION

PC MICROSCOPE (2) - Biology tool for students. Analyse specimens under the microscope
PC MICROSCOPE EXTRA SLIDES (5)
GCSE MATHEMATICS - Calfacts
GCSE PHYSICS - National curriculum
GCSE SCIENCE - Multiple choice
GCSE COMPUTER STUDIES
WORD BY WORD FRENCH - GCSE French
WORD RESCUE - Superb Apogee spelling game
MATH RESCUE - Superb Apogee maths game
SEA SCHOOL - Superb kids maths game
PRESCHOOL PACK - Excellent for 2-5 years
TALKING TEACHER FOR SOUNDBOARDS
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ANIMATED MATHS - for infants
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ANIMATED MULTIPLICATION AND DIVISION
HOORAY FOR HENRIETTA - Maths
HENRIETTA'S BOOK OF SPELLS - Words
SIR ADDALOTS MINI MATH ADVENTURE
THE COLOUR WIZARD - Colouring book, art tutor and story teller
EARLY SPANISH FOR SOUNDBOARDS
GERMAN TUTOR - Learn German
EDUCATIONAL ATLAS 1994 - Superb
PC FASTTYPE VGA - Good typing tutor
PC TUTOR - All about computers

GENERAL

FILE COMPRESSORS - ARJ, PKZip etc
LIBERTY BASIC - New visual basic compat. Windows programming language
EXECUTOR (2) - Macintosh emulator - copy disks and run LOTS of Mac programmes on your PC.
CROSS STITCH DESIGNER FOR WINDOWS
WILL WRITER - Write your own
SCREEN THIEF - Best DOS screen savers
KITTH N KIN FOR WINDOWS - Genealogy
BROTHERS KEEPER v5.1 (2) - Best genealogy
FAMILY TREE JOURNAL - Make history books
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BOOKIE BREAKER - Horse racing prediction
JQ LOTTERY - Still haven't won - try this!
GROWIT MK II - Superb garden planner
ORGANISE YOUR RECORDS, TAPES, CDs
EASY BASE - Superb easy to use database

GRAPHICS/RAYTRACING

PERSISTENCE OF VISION v2.2 (2) - New version of the best raytracing program
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(6 disks) Includes over 300 mono and colour PCX pictures of Santas and Christmas related stuff. Santa screen saver. Yuletide Images PCX Windows Christmas Card list program.

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing:* great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max:* The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)

Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.
Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.
Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.
Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.
Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.
Eye Of The storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.
Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.
Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.
Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.
Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.
Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.
Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.
Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.
Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.
Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.
Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.
Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.
Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.
Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.
The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.
The Rock 'N' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.
The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.
Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.
UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly addictive strategy game.
Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.
Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.
World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!
Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.
Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.
Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!
Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.
Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.
Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.
Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.
International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.
Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...
Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.
Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.
Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.
Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.
Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.
Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.
Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.
Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.
Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.
Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.
World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.
Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.
D-Day
(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.
FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.
Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.
Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.
International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.
Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.
Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.
On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.
Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.
Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.
Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.
Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.
TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.
Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).
Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.
Heimdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.
Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.
IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).
Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.
KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.
Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.
Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.
Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.
Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.
Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?
Under A Killing Moon (CD)
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.
Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.
Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.
Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.
Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.
Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.
Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.
Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.
KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

»

(Left) *Theme Park: Sim City* eat your heart out.

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why is it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone in the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb
(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.

Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever – and we do mean ever. New graphics, a new gun and new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Simulator £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Sim £44.99
Commanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock
(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar
(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99
Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive
(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99
Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.

Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good, too.

Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.

US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.

Warcraft
(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3
(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.

Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.

Commander Blood
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.

Cyberia
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.

Dragon Lore
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3
(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King
(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing
(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99
Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.

Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. Don't be put off by that, though – it's actually quite good.

Voyeur
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and bras in it, but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).

Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – definitely a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

Aladdin
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.

Dark Forces
(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head
(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII
(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99
The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights Of Xentar
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoberanzan
(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary RPG from SSI.

Metaltech: Earthsiege
(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCS that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?

Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail
(85: Recommended) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...

SuperKarts
(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum only an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reaches for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99
Chuck Rock meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could actually be quite good.

Bioforge
(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99
The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is *Bioforge* just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?

Descent
(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic
(78) iD/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'*Doom* in tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault
(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions
(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!

Lost Eden
(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones
(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory
(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Guilty
(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original.

NBA Live
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
Electronic Arts Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.

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NEW ISSUE

On sale 5 October

(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3:* More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer.* A case of *Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2.*

Renegade
(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.
Rise of the Triad
(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.
Super Frog
(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.
Tank Commander
(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!
Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth
(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!
X-COM
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date
(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?
Full Throttle
(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.
Flight Of The Amazon Queen
(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
This game from Warner Interactive is desperately trying to be a LucasArts adventure but failing quite miserably. It's naff.
Hardball 4
(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball.* Surely Warner have to call it quits now?
High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.
Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.
PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.
Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.
Slipstream 5000
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/ speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.
Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.
Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90: Classic) Gametek – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was 'games with very long names'. Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.
Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape – Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.
Virtua Chess
(85: Classic) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.
Warriors
(85: Classic) Mindscape – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk.* Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.
Alex Dampier Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95.*
Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.
Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner – Sports Sim £39.99
Top-down ice hockey gams, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95.*
Chaos Control
(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.
Command & Conquer
(95: Classic) Virgin – Strategy Adventure £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.
Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World.*
Dominus
(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.
Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Sim £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.
Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.
Loadstar
(35) BMG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.
Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.
Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccers* of this world.
Sim Tower
(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Sim City viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive – and the presentation is dire.
Virtual Pool
(91: Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. About as close to a real game of pool as you can get.

Issue 29 – August 1995

Civil War
(83: Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.
FX Fighters
(93: Classic) Philips/GTE – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy.
Hi-Octane
(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts – Racing Game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.
Micro Machines 2
(92: Classic) Codemasters – Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.
Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark – Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.
Perfect General 2
(82: Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.
Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire – Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.
Prisoner Of Ice
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The second game in Infogrames' *Cthulhu* range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.
Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design – Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.
Silverload
(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.
Striker 95
(62) Time Warner – Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.
Ultimate Doom
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?
Vortex
(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive Movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game, It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

Issue 30 – September 1995

Across the Rhine
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.
Action Soccer
(50) Ubisoft – Football Sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.
Air Power
(84: Recommended) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.
AIV Networks
(80: Recommended) Infogrames – Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)
Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay – Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.
Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra – Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.
Lords Of Midnight
(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.
Sim Town
(81: Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.
Simon The Sorcerer 2
(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure Game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.
Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra – Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!
Terminal Velocity
(80: Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.
US Marine Fighters
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 – October 1995

EF2000
(97: Classic) Ocean/DID – Flight Sim £49.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.
Fade To Black
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.
The Need For Speed
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Racing £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3DO now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *FIGP2.* We loved the splendid crashes!
Apache Longbow
(96: Classic) Digital Integration – Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.
Buried In Time
(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.
MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.
Blown Away
(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.
Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.
Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.
Player Manager 2
(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.
Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Domark – Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

WORDPROCESSOR

There's a pretty good mix this month – our usual weirdness, some complaints and it seems that the *First Encounters* fury is going to continue for ever. But as always, keep sending in the rantings and ravings...

FADING TO BLACK

Monsieur le editor! Vous bastards! Vous dare to take le piss out of mon testicles! Vous thinkez zat I need les testicles like les barrage ballons to pull les chicks? Je ne think pas, je have to beat les chicks off with mon humongous todger. And vous thinkez zat I ever let my teddy out of my sight long enough for it to get kidnapped. When I get mes hands on Patrick McCarthy it iz he zat will have les sore testicles – if he has any. I must go now, I have to givez serious rogering to some young french peasont girls.

Adieu.

Conrad Hart, Somewhere in France

Monsieur McCarthy est un grand example de testosterone. We 'ave it on le good authorité zat he is aussi in possession of les testicles enormes. Mais oui, c'est vrai! Monsieur McCarthy est always surrounded by les chicks sexy and he avez to beat zem all off avec un grand shitty stick.

BUGGED KING'S QUEST

I would like to add to the letter you received a few months ago from D Gaspare regarding a number of bugs found in Sierra's *King's Quest VII*.

I experienced plenty of annoying bugs in this game. I also contacted Sierra and they admitted that there were a few bugs and they promptly sent me a patch disk which I was told would sort everything out. In actual fact, this wonderful patch disk did little more than simply generate further bugs. Incidentally, the instructions for the patch disk were wrong as they made reference to a filename in the game that was missing.

Unlike D Gaspare, I was not running QEMM. Initially I was running *KQ7* under Windows for WorkGroups 3.11, but Sierra said that this was probably causing some of the problems. I then ran *KQ7* under Windows 3.1 and yes, the problems were still present. I tried a Beta version of Windows 95 and again, the same problems were still there. Unfortunately Sierra totally ran out of suggestions at this point.

Here are the most common problems I've found so far running *KQ7*...

- Random crashing – either freezing or rebooting
- Illegal instruction messages, under Windows 95
- Saved game corruption
- Display corruption in 16-BIT colour

In conclusion, it appears that Sierra needs to do more debugging in future – that includes patch disks!

I for one will not be buying Sierra crap from now on, unless they can fully convince me that they are competent at producing stuff that will run properly under Windows.

Dave Collins, Southampton

As we go to press, the bods at Sierra have informed us that they are aware of a number of problems with KQ7 but these do not necessarily appear on all machines. There are now further patches available for graphics drivers etc, and these should sort out most of the problems with the game. It should be noted that 8Mb is required to run the game efficiently – especially under Windows 95.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS APPRECIATION SOCIETY

I went out and purchased both *First Encounters* and *Frontier*, and in each case Braben has let me down. I hate him, and I want to get him back!

Jason Pararajasingham, London NW9

Thank god someone has finally stuck up for us all and has told us the truth about *First Encounters*. It's nice that a magazine has finally shown that it actually understands the way the customers feel about a situation. *First Encounters* was shit, and your feature (especially the illustration!) summed things up absolutely perfectly!

Toby Overton, Bristol

You lot at *PC Zone*: "Gamtek should be levelled for releasing a piece of shit like this." You utter, utter, utter lads. Why don't all games mags say it like it is?

Keith Campbell, Norwich

We've had a lot of mail on the subject and have now decided to lay the Frontier: First Encounters *issue to rest now. We have heard that there are further revisions to the game on the way, and although the current boxed copy of the game bearing 'that sticker' is still far from perfect, we have heard that a final, finished and bug-free (shyeah, right) version will be available... er, eventually. Ahem. Anyway, we're pleased that everyone liked the piccy in issue 30. Well, I suppose nearly everyone, that is...*

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either use the traditional method, often described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

DOWN THE PAN

For reasons I am completely unable to comprehend you seem to take great pride in sprinkling your articles with objectionable language and addressing lavatorial topics which have absolutely nothing to do with computing or computer games.

The graphics you used on pages 92 and 93 of issue 30 can only serve to emphasise the direction your magazine deserves to go – down the pan.

Trevor Edmonds, Manchester

'Lavatorial topics which have absolutely nothing to do with computing or computer games.' Really? When exactly have we been running these mythical features then? PC Zone *is 100% committed to providing articles, reviews and features which are entirely relevant to games on the PC.*

We are the only magazine in this sector that regularly addresses all of the problems that a PC games player will have and that is why we are the biggest selling PC games magazine in the UK. If you look at the past year we have introduced a regular hardware review section which rates items of hardware of direct relevance to games... ie graphics cards, joysticks, sound cards, MPEG boards and CD drives, as well as features that cover all elements of PC games culture.

We have addressed numerous contentious issues ranging from the waste of resources spent on rendered intro sequences to the reasons why girls aren't as interested in video games. When exactly have we ever wasted space on irrelevant material? We are in the business of producing editorial which puts PC Zone *ahead of the competition and we do this by putting the readers first. We judge what is required and try to supply it to the best of our abilities.*

If that means sticking up for the general consensus of opinion – as in the situation with First Encounters *– then so be it.*

BRING BACK BITS & PCs or next time CHARLIE BROOKER is NAKED

Illustrating that game with those 'graphics' (it was a picture of a turd with a bow around it, why beat about the bush?) showed that we sympathised with the consumers 100%. First Encounters *is possibly the only game in history that can boast that it doesn't have a single satisfied customer and it has provoked more animosity in the gameplaying fraternity than any other product I have ever come across. Fine, if you feel that* PC Zone *is going 'down the pan'; you are entitled to your opinion, but I suggest that in future you might be better off actually reading the magazine for a change rather than just looking at the pictures.*

MYSTERY MAIL

Take a look at the letter immediately to the right

Well, if people actually wrote in with technical queries we'd run a section that dealt with them. However, we very rarely get letters with that sort of thing in it now... so we don't run the page. Fairly obvious when you think it through really. Oh yes... Charlie Brooker naked? Er, no thanks – we've seen him fully clothed and that's bad enough.

BITTER COMPLAINTS

I am writing to complain bitterly about your use of Shane Richie as an object of ridicule *(PC Zone* Issue 29). I can't believe it – don't you have anything better to do than ask all your readers to send in hate mail about a perfectly innocent and wonderful man?

I thought, and maybe this was wrong of me, that *PC Zone* was a respectable and at least decent computer magazine – not one that childishly victimises popular stage and television stars. Why on earth don't you just stick to taking the rip out on someone on your own annoying level, like the French?

I myself have met Shane Richie and I think he deserves an award not only for his acting, singing, entertaining and general good looks – but also for having to put up with geeks like you. Grow up.

Sarah, Guildford

You're not his wife, are you?

If you're not you are quite clearly a sad and demented young lady who should perhaps look into the possibilities of attending some kind of therapy. Surely you can't have watched The Shane Richie Experience on TV the other night and not felt physically ill? So you've met the guy have you? Well, I'm sure he was quite lovely but I'm not so sure he really deserves an award for the acting and everything else that you said (especially that last bit – eugh!).

OBLIGATORY WEIRDO

I'm writing to you because the voices in my head are telling me to. Yes you are, no! Go away, leave me alone! ARGH! Ahem, excuse me. I recently became possessed by a quadruple entity called Marc and Henry and Nick and Chris. No! Shut up! Shut up! Make it stop! By the way, I find the little crunchy biscuit on the front cover very tasty but why do you put them in a little plastic sleeve?

Good night Mother.

Tim Booth, Milton Keynes

They're put in the little plastic sleeves – stupid – so that people can't rip them off and eat them in the shop.

NON-RELEVANCE

As you seem to be complaining about the irrelevance of many of your readers' letters, I thought I'd send you a list...

1 Nice effort on assessing the DOS performance of graphics cards. A serious computer mag would have gone into more detail, but unless it isn't directly related to Windows 95, they'd probably think it was beneath them.

2 Had any problems running games under Windows 95?

3 I loved *Dark Forces* – but did anyone else notice the relative difficulty in the last episode?

4 Do you really have to set mines and stand on them to get some of the lives and revives? I know it's sci-fi but...

5 I have a Vale P90 *(Oh god, not a hardware list, please! – Ed). USNF* ran very slow and jerkily and while I know that I don't have a ninja bastard PC, I would like to think that it was at least a competent Japanese warrior with some doubts over his parentage. »

(Above and right) Especially for Phoenix the SCUM, here's Cammy giving her opponent grief in *Street Fighter*, as well as a rather nice close-up.

« **6** Do us a favour and rate *C&C*, *This Means War* and *Offensive* against each other before I part with my moolah.

Matthew Soulsby, Coventry

Bloody hell, it's been a long time since we had a letter with numbered questions! Well, here's the suitably numbered answers:

1 *Thanks. As ever we wanted to run a feature about hardware where it wasn't simply a 'hardware review'. Our only concern is where it is relevant to games. We don't want to do benchmarking... if you want to read about that sort of thing buy* PC Pro *or* Computer Shopper. *No, all we wanted to do was say, "This card is a shit-hot DOS card and will make* Doom *run like an absolute bastard."*

2 *Yes, Windows 95 has caused a number of problems with several games – although things tend to vary depending on which of our machines we try it on. Personally, I've had trouble with* Doom *(but only on one machine),* MechWarrior 2 *and* Fade To Black *and I've heard numerous complaints from other people. Many games object to running in a Windows mode and insist that you reboot the machine in DOS mode – but that doesn't always work. Unfortunately.*

Something that we've found particularly useful is running a multi-boot system so that you can choose whether you boot up in Windows 95, Windows 3.1 or DOS 6.22. It takes a lot of disk space but at least it does ensure that everything will run. This is only really something for people with 1Gig+ drives though!

3 *Relative difficulty? Er... you mean it gets harder. Well, er, yes. I suppose.*

4 *No. You just need to be able to play the thing properly.*

5 *Er... what am I supposed to say here? Er, yes, I suppose. I think.*

6 *When all of the games are available there is a very good chance that we will pitch the three of them against each other. But let's face it – C&C still isn't in the shops!*

CAMMY'S BUM

Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo is my life. I am the ultimate, I am the SuperCombo-UltraMasher (SCUM). If you haven't heard of me then you must be living in Outer Mongolia. My reign is not complete though – there is one other. The FascistUliginousComboKicker has challenged me to a duel and the loser must replace their P133 with a ZX81.

So just what is the problem? I hear you all cry. You are obviously the elite. I bow down and worship you.

Well... to get to the point, just two weeks ago I was informed that my opponent will be playing as... Cammy! ARRRRRGGGHHHH!!! I'm not too chuffed about this. It's not that I hate her, you understand. No, the problem is quite the opposite. I'm in love. I cannot bring myself to fight.

Phoenix the SCUM, Maidstone

It has to be said, sad though it is, that the Cammy sprite does have a seriously er, cute, er... bum. Bloody hell, this is getting seriously sad. Anyway, anyway, general consensus of opinion is that you are a completely and utterly sad gimp and we all know that the sexiest video game character in history is actually Sophia from Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis.

DEMO MISSING?

I am writing about your *Magic Carpet 2 Blueprint* that you ran some time ago. You mentioned that there would be a second part of the *Blueprint* and an exclusive demo – but what happened?

Richard Hall, Staffs

Unfortunately, due to some minor technical problems we weren't able to bring you the demo in that particular issue, but you will have noticed that last month's PC Zone *actually featured the exclusive demo on the CD... and it was smart. You'll also notice that we review the game in this issue.*

TELL THEM TO GET LOST

Would it be possible to stop the inane drivellings of Ewan Loughlin and Mark McDonald from East Kilbride? Just what the hell are they on? They're completely out to lunch. Their highly interesting letters range from "I have a greenhouse" to "incidentally, Imps have anal passages". Although I'm incredibly thrilled by Ewan's discovery and believe he deserves a medal – is it relevant? Mark has been bollocking on about chins for some reason and then about *Murder She Wrote*. The lynch mob is already organised – can I have their addresses?

G Roderick, Wales

We put the odd weird letter in to make an example of people. I don't believe they exist as their address seems to change every month. Anyway, the inane drivellings appear to have stopped for a while, so maybe we won't have to put up with them anymore. Z

John's bit on the side...

It looks as though the games industry is trying to get all serious very quickly. I don't know if you've noticed, but virtually all of the big software houses seem to have changed the way they try and get coverage for the big products that are out there. Magazines like *PC Zone* and its many competitors will always give coverage on new games, but until recently had you ever seen anything about games in *The Sunday Times?* Well, now *The Times* has done more than just give games a mention – a few weeks ago its Culture section had a two-page feature on *The Darkening!*

Having floundered around for years and years, it seems that the games industry is now desperate to be taken as seriously as its music and movie counterparts. But is it really ready? I know it's something that is very dear to all of us, but as far as the general public is concerned there is still something of a stigma about computer games. Titles like *Doom* will always be cool and people are gradually waking up to this, but there's still a general attitude of "eugh... computer games". People still turn their noses up at it 'cause they still think that games are played by spotty geeks with no social life. It's a tired and old-fashioned perception I know, and the console boom probably helped shake it off a bit, but games still aren't cool.

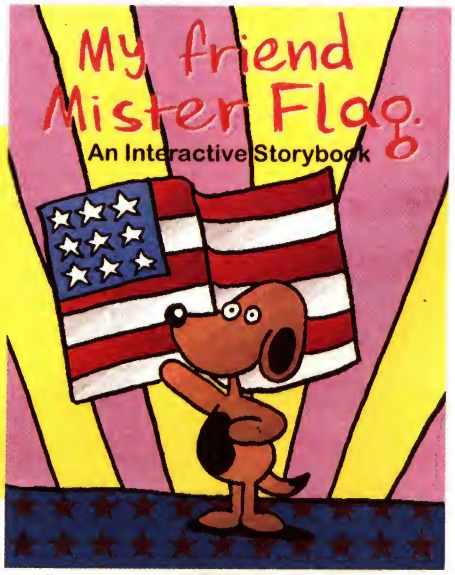
I hate to say it, but although 'big' games like *Wing Commander III* sell a million copies and make more money than an average selling album, we're not going to see games reaching everyone for another couple of years. People are still scared of the technology, they're still affected by the computer 'culture' – it's still not a part of people's everyday lives – so they're scared of it. Who knows, maybe all of the hype that surrounded the launch of Windows 95 helped a bit?

Bill Gates wants a common interface to be established for all consumer electronics devices (VCRs, TVs, satellite and cable systems, video on demand) and obviously he's keen for it to be Windows. Maybe when everyone is used to interacting with computer systems they'll change their attitudes?

In the meantime though, all of the major software houses are desperately trying to establish themselves as a major brand. The realm of the 'super publisher' has been reached and we're seeing games advertising appearing everywhere. An ad for *Doom* on the SNES in cinemas? *EF2000* cinema ads? Even *Primal Rage* on telly. The question is, do we really care yet though?

Interactive Multimedia Products we'd like to see Part 2

My friend Mister Flag.



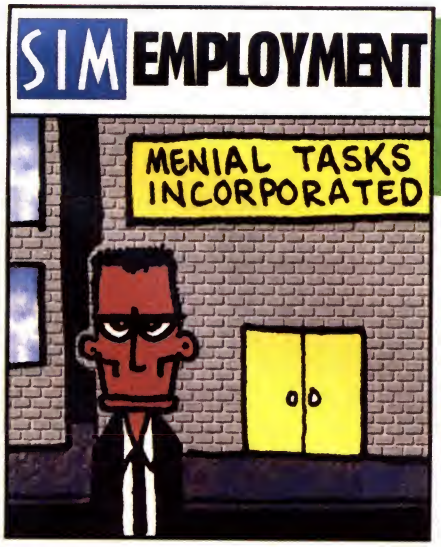
The latest instalment in the highly acclaimed Melvin Mutt range of interactive educational children's story-books! Your kids will join Melvin as he attends his school's annual 4th of July celebrations. This is just the start of a sophisticated, yet easy-to-follow multimedia exploration of the shining, shimmering glory that is the American way of life. Zany cartoon animation explains in detail why the United States is the greatest nation on Earth, how apple pie is made, and why selling hi-tech weapons of destruction to small developing countries is nothing less than the Will of God. Sing along with Melvin as he recites the US National Anthem again and again and again, and then machine-guns the population of a Vietnamese village in the face. "My Friend Mister Flag" will prepare any child for the coming of the wondrous New World Order in which the USA will righteously reign supreme!

Topics covered by this title include:

- Why the Middle East is naught but a hotbed of godless corruption
- How simple covert operations can free South America!
- The American Dollar: symbol of free spirit.
- How to clean, load, and fire your army-issue assault rifle.
- Surviving a nuclear holocaust through good ol' American-style prayer

"An invaluable educational tool which no child should be without"

- Former Vice-President Dan Quayle



SIM EMPLOYMENT

The game of full-time menial employment.

Unemployed? Unemployable? Fret no more- now there's SIM EMPLOYMENT! Sim Employment is the PC world's first utterly authentic employment simulator, designed to bring the full flavour of the work-a-day experience onto your screen and into your home! Choose from an increasingly narrow range of careers, ranging from tepid office jobs to fast-food sweatshop slavery. Clock on every morning ad nauseum! Mourn the passing of endless swathes of time as you emotionally decompose beneath the relentless glare of a VDU! Nonchalantly contemplate suicide whilst absent-mindedly toying with paperclips and pens! You'll swear you really are in full-time employment- so real, it's unreal!

You'll learn how to:

- Become an insignificant cog in the capitalist machine!
- Lose all sense of your own identity!
- Engage in shockingly abusive yet light-hearted verbal jousting with workmates!
- Sigh resignedly each and every dawn!

Feel the nervous tension rise as you endure relentless bollockings from the Sim Employment "virtual boss", Mr Hardnuts.

TORN ASUNDER

At last! The bloodiest beat-em-up of them all splashes out of the arcades and onto your PC! Choose from twelve experienced fighters as you punch, kick, murder and maim your way through a series of deadly opponents! Each character has over 365 deadly 'special moves' and 750 fatalities! Methodically break every bone in your victims body! Slash faces open with rusty lengths of chain! Crack your foe's skull open over your knee and drink its bubbling contents! You'll be sickened! You'll be appalled! You'll be punching the air with an eerie, distant look in your eyes, chanting "Torn Asunder.. Torn Assunder" over and over again with an almost religious fervour!

Suitable for kids aged 5-10, who want to become vicious, ignorant hooligans by the age of 19.

Feast upon your opponents gargling remains!

Gasp as Wu Tang Clan punches holes through his victims pliant bodies!

"A nightmare of ghoulish obscenity" says TV's Nicholas Witchell

Mr Cursor

He's afraid of... David Copperfield

WE'VE HAD PLENTY OF AWFUL interactive multimedia dinosaur pop star CD-ROM efforts (use your mouse to navigate through the tedious world of David Bowie etc), but how about those bloody annoying stars of a different ilk? Like ones who don't actually make music? Like, er... well, Alan Titchmarsh for instance? Think about the possibilities with that one: gardening tips and God, all stranded together over 614 megabytes. And, if you take the right route (via Pink Perpetuals, potting compost and quotations from the Book of Proverbs), you reach a trippy multi-coloured spinning mandala thingy, with a winking Thora Hird in the middle. No? It needs work, admittedly.

But what about Noel Edmunds? The CD would be called *Bastard!*, obviously. Or Eammon Holmes' *Holmes Sweet Holmes*, containing a tour of his house. No? Well then, how does Nick Berry grab you? It could be called *Berry Berry*, and come with a free gift of a large poster of someone suffering from beri-beri.

Hmmm. On second thoughts, maybe they wouldn't be such a good idea. In fact scratch everything I've said so far.

But I'll tell you the best concept for a CD-ROM I've come up with so far – a shitehouse interactive jobbie based on Mr Magic himself, David Copperfield. Now there's a despicable person for you!

David and Claudia get loaded

The CD would have to be called *Mysterious Magic Man* (*It's Magic* is a bit lightweight, a bit Paul Danielsy). Oh, and the packaging of *Mysterious Magic Man* would be sort of 'magic' itself: thanks to a battery of miniature lasers inside the box it'd transform itself into an animated hologram of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, bathed in a golden mist. You walk into the computer games department, think "Bugger me, it's the Hanging Gardens of Babylon," pick it up, inadvertently trigger a tiny mercury switch, and suddenly a disembodied voice says: "Hi, I'm Claudia Schiffer, the Magic Man's chick... don't put us back on the shelf – load us up".

And the extra brilliant thing is that you then discover that the *Mysterious Magic Man* interactive CD is free. It costs you nothing. "The retail price is, indeed, zero pence," says the shop assistant, when quizzed. David Copperfield really *is* magic, you now realise.

So you leave the shop, zoom home, and turn on your PC. You're about to stick the *Mysterious Magic Man* CD into place when the monitor and speakers spring to life...

Claudia: Stop! You don't even need to put the CD in the drawer. You're in David Copperfield's mysterious magic world now. Anything is possible. What do you want to do?

You: Blimey! Can I just talk to Him?

Claudia: Of course you can. Here He is.

David: *(Appearing magically, dressed in white)* What do you want to talk about?

You: I was just wondering about that Great Wall of China caper you pulled off... you walked right through it.

David: Yes, I did. I can alter my molecules.

You: Oh, I see. Well, do you bother having doors inside your house? Or are there just loads of walls?

David: I do have doors, yes, but they're there for Claudia's benefit rather than my own.

You: So if you lived alone, would you have them filled in?

David: I probably would, yes.

You: Could you kind of sink down into the ground, like down to the earth's core, and just sort of 'live there forever'?

David: If I wanted to, yes I could.

You: Excellent!

David: But I *don't* want to.

You: Oh. Er, how fast can you fly?

David: I can fly as fast as I like.

You: What, faster than sound?

David: If I want to, yes.

You: 8000 mph?

David: Eight million mph. Eight trillion mph. As fast as I like, as I said.

You: Yet your hair still manages to stay all poncey and bouffanty?

David: I have magic hair.

You: That's quite enough. I refuse to believe in you anymore.

David: In that case I don't exist.

Your fifty quid – now you see it, now you don't

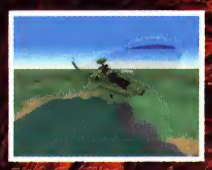
There's a loud pinging noise, a wind blows up and dies down, and suddenly the whole scene clears. No Claudia Schiffer, no David Copperfield, and no Hanging Gardens of Babylon. But there *is* a CD case by your PC, and you note the title: *Mysterious Magic Man*. Then, next to it, you spot a receipt. Closer inspection of the receipt reveals the words 'Mysterious Magic Man CD... £49.99'.

Quite how this has come about you can't be certain, but whether it was a natural brain misfunction, or induced by drugs, one thing is for sure... you've just blown 50 quid on a David Copperfield Interactive CD. Oh dear! Still, these things happen. Z

Armed and Dangerous

APACHE LONGBOW

Apache-Longbow...frontline action with unprecedented detail, realism and gameplay. From quickstart free-for-all to demanding real-world missions...Apache-Longbow rules the battlefield - day and night.



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